THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS

(Al-Kholafa'a Al-Rashidin)

الخلفاء الراشدين

By
Dr. Ahmad zidan

The Rightly Guided Caliphs

(Al-Kholafa'a Al-Rashidîn)
according to the earliest authenticated sources

by

Dr. Ahmad Zîdan
Mrs. Dina Zidan

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IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCI-FUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

All Praise be to GOD, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers and peace be upon Mohammed His servant and Messenger.

Dr Ahmad Zidan

Dr Ahmad Zidan, was born on Monday 1st Ramadhan 1360 H. in Egypt, to a family from the house of Enan (Âl Enan), who are direct descendants of Umar Ibn El Khattab, through his son Abd Allah Ibn Umar and his wife the daughter of El Hassan Ibn Ali ibn Abi Taleb and Fatimah Al Zahra'a (may Allah be pleased with them) the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) [1]. Dr Zidan's ancestors came to Egypt from Al Madinah Al Munawwarah during the reign of Yazeed Ibn Mua'wia Ibn Abu Suffian.

He grew up in a family of renowned religious scholars and was endued from an early age, with a great sense of affinity for his religion, his grandfather, an eminent religious scholar of his time, taught him the Qur'an which, he memorised by the age of ten. It was also his grandfather who instilled in him his strong sense of adherence to Islam, which served him well during the years he studied and travelled abroad.

Dr Ahmad Zidan received his early education in Egypt and undertook higher studies at universities in Europe and the U.S.A. obtaining his Ph.D. 1966.(Har), D.Sc.1969.(Gen). He has lectured at universities throughout the U.S.A. and Europe. He is a Professor of International Relations at the Institut Universitaire De Hautes

(1) According to the officially certified documents and to the legal records of the Court of Mansoura dated 10th ZulQadah 1148 H. and 18th Shawwal 1180 H. and the record of the Court of Al Malik Al Saleh Cairo dated 13th Shawwal 1192 H. and the report of the Committee of Amir Sulayman Al Razzaz approved in 1200 H. and to the historical record of Al Manawi, Al Sakhawi and Ali Pasha Mubarak. Also according to the findings of genealogist Dr Mohamed Galal.

Etudes International and has been playing an important role for several years in international affairs with special emphasis on, the Gulf region's policies.

Dr Ahmad Zidan is the Chairman of the Muslim World

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Mrs Dina Zidan

Mrs Dina Zidan is an English Muslim born to a Conservative Catholic family, she grew up and was educated in England, after successfully completing her academic studies, she took an M.A. in comparative religion. She has lived and travelled extensively throughout the Middle East, Europe, Africa and the U.S.A and is an active writer on Islamic issues, particularly those which concern women. She was exposed to many translations of the Qur'an and continued to have great interest in it, and its studies. She began to closely study the Qur'an, giving special attention to its interpretations. Mrs Zidan is the co-translator of, the Translation of the Glorious Qur'an.

Other major works include:-

- Translations of The Glorious Qur'an
- Comparative Religion
- The West's Arrogance Matched Only By It's Ignorance
- World Arrogance
- The Intrigues Of Ignorance
- Christianity Myth or Message?
- Effects of Interference in World Politics
- Concepts and Methods in International Relations
- Foreign Policy Analysis
- Strategic Studies
- Civilization of Islam
- The Battles of the Prophet
- Revitalisation of the Religion's Sciences

PREFACE

This book seeks most of all, to outline the essential aspects of Islam as an ever living force, and not just as a matter of historical interest, in a language that is contemporary and in fact, is addressed to those who are acquainted with the dialect of modern thought. Moreover, we have tried to answer in many cases the charges made by Western works against the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Islam is the Religion for mankind and its message is universal and eternal. Islam, is not a religion only guaranteeing the betterment and uplifting of an individual's private and personal life, neither is it a religion consisting merely of some dogma, rituals and customs. In fact, it is a complete way of life, it guides mankind according to the dictates of God Almighty, received through His Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him). It is an all embracing system and code of life that does not omit any sphere of human existence. Islam stands for the establishment of the Law of God Almighty on His universe by means of, organised, disciplined and complete guidance in all walks of life, individual, social, material, moral, economic, political, legal, cultural, national and international.

The Qur'an invites mankind to enter the fold of Islam without any reservation and, enjoins them to follow the system of guidance set out by God Almighty within it. The decline of religion in the modern age can be attributed greatly to the relegation of religion to the precincts of mankind's personal life alone, leaving all his multifarious activities in other fields of life to be guided by his whims

and caprices. Little wonder that human societies today are beset with apparently intractable dilemmas.

Islam, on the other hand, emphatically declares that its objectives are twofold; purification of the soul and reformation and, reconstruction of society based upon the eternal and all embracing principles, set forth in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (ways) of the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him).

Islam establishes a balance between individualism and collectivism. It believes in the individual personality of man and, holds everyone personally responsible and accountable to God. It guarantees fundamental rights to the individual and does not permit anyone to tamper with them. It makes proper development of the personality of mankind as one of the prime objectives of its educational policy. It does not subscribe to the view that, mankind must lose his individuality in the society or in the State. God Almighty tells us in the Qur'an:

"...God does not change the condition of a people unless they change what is in themselves..." (Surah 13 verse 11)

and:

"...mankind shall have only what he has striven for."

(Surah 53 verse 39)

Islam awakens a sense of social responsibility in mankind, organises humanity in a society and state and, enjoins the individual and the entire social organism to subscribe to the social good of all. In Islam, prayer is offered in congregation which inculcates social discipline among its followers. Everyone is enjoined to pay Zakat (tax for the poor), as laid down in the Qur'an:

"And in their wealth was a portion for the needy who asked and the deprived." (Surah 51 verse 19)

And the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:

He is not a believer who takes his fill while his neighbour is starving."

Thus, Islam neglects neither the individual nor the society, it establishes harmony and balance between the two and, assigns its proper role to each.

A unique feature of Islam is, that it does not divide life into watertight compartments of matter and spirit. It regards life as a unity and stands not for life denial but for life fulfillment. Islam does not believe in asceticism as an extreme. It does not ask man to avoid or ignore things material. It holds that, spiritual elevation is to be achieved by living piously while at the same time not renouncing this world. God Almighty directs us as follows:

" And there are some who say, "Our Lord, provide us with good in this world and good in the Hereafter..."

(Surah 2 verse 201)

and God Almighty strongly censures those who renounce His blessings:

"Say, "Who has forbidden the ornament of God which He brought forth for His servants, and who has forbidden the good things which He has provided"? Say, "These are for the believers in the life of this world, but on the Day of Resurrection they shall be exclusively for them, thus We expound the Revelations to a people who know". (Surah 7 verse 32)

and He enjoins us:

"...eat and drink, but do not be excessive..." (Surah 7 verse 31)

The Prophet (ppuh) said:

"Keep the fast and break it at the proper time and stand in prayer and devotion in the night and sleep, for your body has a right over you, and your eyes have a right over you, and your wife has a right over you, and the person who pays you a visit has a right over you."

Thus, Islam does not admit any separation between material and moral, mundane and spiritual life. It enjoins man to devote all his energies to the reconstruction of life on healthy foundations. It teaches him that moral and material powers must be welded together and that, spiritual salvation can be achieved by using the material resources for the good of man, and not by living a life of total asceticism.

The message of Islam is for the entire human race. God Almighty tells us in the opening Surah (Chapter) of the Qur'an that, He is the God of all the worlds:

"All praise be to God, The Lord of the Worlds."

(Surah 1 verse 2)

and that the Prophet is the Messenger for the whole of mankind:

"Say, "O people, I am the Messenger of God to you all, to Whom belongs the Dominion of the heavens and the earth, there is no god but He, He bestows life and ordains death, so believe in God and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in God and His Commandments, follow him that you may be guided". (Surah 7 verse 158)

and

"Blessed is God the One Who has revealed the Criterion to His servant; that he may be a warner to the Worlds."

(Surah 25 verse 1)

and also

"And We did not send you but as a mercy to all beings."

(Surah 21 verse 107)

In Islam, all mankind are equal, whatever their colour, language, race or nationality. It addresses the conscience of humanity and banishes all false barriers of race, status and wealth. There can be no denying the fact that such barriers have always existed, and do exist even today in this so-called, age of enlightment. Islam removed all these impediments and founded the idea of the entire humanity being one family of God. **The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:**

"All creatures of God form the family of God, and he is the best loved of God who loves best His creatures."

"O Lord! Lord of my life and everything in this universe! I affirm that all human beings are brothers of one another."

"Respect the ways of God and be affectionate to the family of God."

Islam is universal in its outlook and approach and does not admit barriers and distinctions which, divide humanity into warring masses. It aims to unite humanity under one banner, and to a world torn by national rivalries and feuds, as our world is today, it brings the message of life and hope and promise of a glorious future.

It has been said that the greatest need of the present time is for a philosophy, which will mediate between conflicting claims of stability and progress and, supply a principle of growth. Islam bestows on mankind an ideology that satisfies the demands both of stability and, change.

Life is of necessity, neither rigid beyond change nor, merely change pure and simple, for its own sake. The basic problems of life remain the same in all ages and countries, but the ways and means of solving them and the techniques of their handling have undergone various changes with the passage of time. Islam provides for both.

The Qur'an and Sunnah embody the eternal principles of guidance given by the Lord of the Universe. This guidance comes from God Almighty, Who is free from limitations of space and time and as such, the principles of individual and social behaviour revealed by Him, are eternal. But God has given us the general principles only and, has endowed mankind with the freedom to apply them in every age, in the way suited to the spirit and conditions of that age. It is through Ijtihad, the process through which matters of law and jurisprudence are settled within the spirit of the Shariah, in respect of matters which have not been laid down specifically, that men of every age try to apply Divine guidance to the problems of their time. Thus, the basic guidance is eternal and permanent, while there is a mechanism to apply it to the particular needs of every successive age. This is what keeps Islam vital and ever living.

The fundamental characteristic of Islamic ideology is that, it is not a man-made system but, one revealed by the Creator Himself. That is why it is altogether different and dissimilar from other ide-

ologies which, are the product of human thinking and human effort, and hence, innate with weaknesses, loop holes and imperfection. But since a man's limitations do not permit him to fully perceive the present or go beyond his immediate environment, all the systems devised by mankind are of very limited use and validity. They may be useful in dealing with some current affairs or temporary problems but cannot be of abiding value and what is more important, cannot solve mankind's problems in their entirety. In contrast to this, Islam is not a man-made religion, it has been revealed to mankind by God Almighty, the Creator, Nourisher and Sustainer of the Universe.

This universe did not come into existence by accident, or merely by chance. It has a Creator, Who directs its every move and function even to the most minute detail. He has appointed mankind as His deputy on the earth, and has ordained for the fulfillment of material and physical needs of mankind as well as for his moral, spiritual and intellectual requirements. To meet these objectives God sent His Prophets to convey His guidance to mankind.

The duty of a prophet includes, the dissemination of the message of God to all the people and to implement the teachings in such a way that, his life example may guide his followers for all time to come. That is why the fundamental sources of Islamic ideology are two: The Qur'an, the revealed Book of God, and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam, his entire life example, the record of which is known as the Hadith.

Since Islam is based on revelation, all its fundamental principles are unchangeable and no human being nor, even the entire Muslim world, can bring about any change in these principles. Thus, the

contention that Islam is that, which Muslims practice is incorrect, and for this misconception we can trace much of the confusion and distortion about Islam that prevails in the Western world until to-day.

Although every religion claims to be a revealed way of life, today, no religion except Islam, has its teachings quite free of any of the encroachments and inroads of time and society. Firstly, other religions date back to a time when no system of recording in writing was in existence. But more importantly is that, the followers of these religions have made additions and alterations and amendments in their teachings and books so, as to suit their own views and narrow interests. In fact, the adherents of none of the other existing religions would claim that their original teachings are extent in full or, that they never underwent change after change in the different periods of history.

The Qur'an however, exists exactly as it was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him), without undergoing any change whatsoever, There is historical evidence to prove its authenticity, a fact even acknowledged by the enemies of Islam.

Islam, is a religion without mythology. Its teachings are simple, intelligible and appealing to human reason. It is free from superstitions and irrational belief and dogma. Unity of God, Prophethood of Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) and, the concept of life after death are, the basic articles of its faith. They are based on reason and sound logic. All the teachings of Islam follow from these basic beliefs and are simple to comprehend and straightforward to follow. In Islam, there is no hierarchy of priests, no far-

fetched abstractions, no complicated rites and rituals. We are enjoined to approach the Book of God directly and to live his life according to its directives.

Islam, awakens in man the faculty of reason, inculcates the spirit of inquisitiveness and exhorts him to use his intellect. It enjoins him to see things in the light of reality. Islam takes mankind out of the world of superstition and darkness and initiates him to knowledge and light. It is a practical religion and does not indulge in idle speculations and futile theorisations. It claims that faith is not mere profession of belief, it is the very mainspring of life. Righteous conduct must flow from belief in God. Religion is something to be lived, as the reader will witness in the lives of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and not an object of mere verbal eulogising and lip service.

Every other religion of the world has been named, either after the name of its founder or, after the community or nation in which that religion took its birth. We find examples of this in Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism etc. Contrary to this rule, Islam enjoys the unique distinction of having no such association with any particular person or people. The term 'Mohammedanism' is a misnomer coined by Western orientalists in which they imply that, Muslims worship the Prophet Mohammed in a similar fashion to the way Jesus is worshipped in Christianity, they go even further to refer to the Qur'an as the 'Mohammedan bible' imputing thereby that Mohammed wrote the Qur'an himself. Nothing could be further from the truth, the Qur'an itself sets out the position of the Prophet Mohammed in the following verse which was repeated to the people upon the death of the Prophet (ppuh) by Abu Bakr (May Allah

be pleased with him), the first Caliph of Islam:

"And Mohamed is but a Messenger, Messengers have passed away before him. So if he died or was killed would you then turn back to disbelief? Whoever turns back to disbelief does no harm to God, but God will reward the grateful." (Surah 3 verse 144)

Islam is a universal religion and its objective is, to create and cultivate in mankind the quality and attitude of submission to the Divine Will.

"Islam", as a matter of fact is an attributive title. Whoever possesses this attribute, may he belong to any race, community, country or clan, is a Muslim. Islam is an attitude of mind, a way of thinking and a mode of life. The Arabic word 'Islam' means submission, surrender and obedience. As a religion, it stands for complete surrender and obedience to God Almighty alone.

The original source from which all principles and injunctions of Islam are drawn is the Qur'an. This book was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) part by part, over a period of twenty three years of his life.

The Sunnah of the Prophet is the second source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. Sunnah literally means, a way or rule or manner of acting, or mode of life. Hadith means, any saying conveyed to mankind either through audition or revelation. In its original sense, therefore, Sunnah indicates the doings and Hadith the sayings of the Prophet. In the terminology of Islamic law, however, Sunnah and Hadith are used interchangeably and purport to convey any saying of the Prophet, or any action of his or his silent approval of an action or practice of another person.

The third source from which the Law in Islam is drawn is, Ijtihad or, exercise of judgment, in accordance with the spirit and the general scheme of the Shariah in respect of matters which have not been specifically decided upon by it. The word itself is derived from the Arabic root jahd, which means, exerting oneself to the utmost or to the best of one's ability, and Ijtihad, which literally conveys the same significance, is technically applicable to a Jurist's exerting the faculties of the mind to the utmost for the purpose of, forming an opinion in the light of the Islamic principles in a case of law where the Shariah is not specific.

The fourth source from which the law of Islam is drawn is, Ijma'a, which, is the consensus of opinion of the pious and the learned. As will be seen these two principles were first introduced by the Second Caliph, Umar ibn Al Khattab. The Qur'an does recognise revelation as a source of knowledge which is higher than reason, but at the same time admits that the truth of the principles established by revelation is confirmed by reason. Hence, it repeatedly appeals to reason and denounces those who do not use their reasoning faculty. The Qur'an sees the Muslim as a moral being, who should think and act in a manner which reflects his faith at all times, and as a state citizen, Islam pervades every aspect of his existence.

The political system of Islam is entirely different from other systems, such as democracy, communism or that of, absolute monarchy. Islam is based upon the spiritual and moral foundations of Divine Revelation, however, it is not a theocracy as such, in that, it does not confer Divine Rights on any elected or hereditary individual or party.

Islam is based upon three main principles, The Oneness of God, the Prophethood and the Caliphate. Within this system, the right of God Almighty, the Creator, Master and Sovereign of all creation, to command and to take due obedience from all creation is recognised. The Will of God Almighty is received as His Law, through His Messengers in the form of the Qur'an. The interpretation and exemplification of it, is found in the examples of the Messengers. The Caliphate, is essentially an entrustment whereby man acts as a representative of God on earth to exercise God's Will and administer His Law within the limits given to him by God Almighty.

Any claim to sovereignty whether of a person or a family, a nation or the masses as a whole, within the sphere of God's real and factual sovereignty is, nothing more than a myth and a misconception. The evil consequences of this misunderstanding will not fall on the real Sovereign of this universe we live in, but upon the claimant who has not realised his own place and position in it. In the light of this reality, only those who have grasped this principle and the fact that, mankind's welfare is consequential upon his acceptance of God as Sovereign, have truly grasped the purpose of their existence.

It therefore follows that, a system of government for human life on this basis is the only correct viewpoint. This system is the Caliphate, the election of the Caliph should be made by the franchise of the masses, the members of the assembly should be elected by vote, all governmental matters should be administered upon their advice. They should have the fullest right to criticise and call them to account. However, all this should be done with the consciousness that God is the Sovereign and not the people. We are only His

representatives, we will have to render account to Him for every action, and above all, the moral principles and legal commandme-nts and restrictions must be regarded as inviolable decrees of God Almighty.

The fundamental principle should be that, we cannot legislate in matters in which God has given clear guidance, while in matters in which He has not done so, we must appreciate that He Himself has delegated freedom of action for us to legislate these matters by mu-tual consultation, within the confines of the spirit and meaning of the established Divine principles.

It is essential that the administration and management of the Caliphate should be in the hands of those who fear God, who ren-der obedience to Him, who seek His pleasure in all things, whose lives bear witness to their faith and certainty of their accountability to God on the Day of Judgment.

A detailed and serious study of the lives of the Rightly Guided Caliphs enables us to understand and follow Islamic teachings to their ultimate extent. Their lives open before us, a treasure of knowledge and experience about the Islamic system of life which offers, the only real solution to the present and future problems of mankind.

Dr. Ahmad Zidan

Mrs. Dina Zidan

8th May 1998

INTRODUCTION

The covenant made between man and God, at the time of the Creation of the Universe, in which man accepted the trust of 'free will' that God Almighty offered to all created things is recorded in the Qur'an:

"Indeed We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, but mankind undertook to bear it, surely he was unfair, ignorant." (Surah 33 verse 72)

In man's affirmation of taking up this trust, lies the significance of his existence as God's Khalifah on earth:

"And when your Lord said to the angels, "I am creating successors on the earth." They said, "Will You create on it those who will spread corruption and spill blood, although we celebrate Your praise and extol Your Holiness?" He said, "I know what you do not know." (Surah 2 verse 30)

It is therefore, mankind's primordial mandate to fulfill himself as God's Khalifah upon the earth.

The word Khalifah, when literally translated into English means, 'a person delegated to enforce Islamic Law' under the Sovereignty of God Almighty within an Islamic State.

The duty of the Caliph is not to interpret the Shariah (Divine Law) and Religious matters in general, but to administer the Law and to act as Qadi (Judge) within the given confines of the Shariah.

There are numerous verses in the Qur'an in which the institution of the Caliphate is defined in its various aspects. The following verse gives directive on the office of the Qadi:

"...We have appointed you khalifah on the earth, so judge between the people with justice, and do not follow vain desires, lest it leads you astray from the Way of God..." (Surah 38 verse 26)

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:

"I have put you upon a way which is clear, and even its night is like an enlightened day. Nobody will deviate from that way after me except a doomed person."

The first four Khalifahs (Caliphs), Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them) were true Khalifahs, who fulfilled the function of the Caliph to its absolute. Thus, they are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs. After them, the Caliphate was changed into a kingship in which the Rulers of the Islamic State were known as Amir al Mu'aminin, (rulers of the believers) for this reason, only the first four Caliphs are regarded as complete idealisations of the caliphate.

In another Hadith (saying of the Prophet), it is reported that the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said:

"The Religion began with Prophethood and God's Mercy. Then it will pass on to Khalifah and God's Mercy. Then it will be changed into a bitter kingship in which there will prevail cruelty and injustice and the people will commit evil. They will wear silken robes, drink intoxicants and indulge in adultery. Even though they commit sin, God will bestow on them sustenance and favour until they are summoned to Him."

And the Messenger of God also said:

"There will come Khalifahs after me, render them your obedience, for the ruler is as a shield with which a man protects himself. If they are righteous and rule over you well, they shall have their reward, but if they work evil and rule over you in wickedness, then punishment will fall upon them and you will be free of it, for they are responsible for you, but you are not responsible for them."

QURAISH

-Revealed at Makkah-

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

1. For the tradition of Quraish;

2. Their tradition of travelling in winter and summer;

3. So let them worship the Lord of this House;

4. Who provides them with food lest they should go hungry, and with security lest they should live in fear.

(Qur'an Surah 106)

The Tribe of Quraish

The Quraish, were the most noble tribe in Arabia and one of the most powerful. Their descendance is traced to Abraham, through his son Ismail.

God Almighty tells us in the Qur'an that Abraham prayed:-

"Our Lord, I have settled some of my offspring in a valley where there is no sown land, by Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish regular prayers, so make the hearts of people yearn towards them, and provide them with sustenance, that they may be grateful. Our Lord, truly You know what we keep secret and what we disclose; and nothing in the earth or in heaven is hidden from God. Praise be to God, the One Who has granted me, in old age, Ismail and Isaac, indeed my Lord always hears prayer. My Lord, make me establish regular prayer, and also from among my offspring. Our Lord, accept my prayer."

(Qur'an Surah 14 verses 37- 40)

"And when Abraham said, "My Lord make this city a safe place and provide its inhabitants with fruits, ..."

(Qur'an Surah 2 verse 126)

In about the year 400 C.E. (Christian Era), a man of Quraish named Qusayy ibn Kilab, the fifth grandfather of the Prophet, asked for the hand in marriage of Hubba, the daughter of Hulayl the chief of Khuza'ah, an Arab tribe descendant from Ismail who had migrated to Yemen, and then, returned northwards to take their place as lords of Makkah.

Qusayy was well respected, worked hard at his trade and gained much influence, so much so that, his father in law preferred him in succession to his own sons. Upon the death of Hulayl, a battle ensued between them, which was concluded with the agreement that Qusayy should rule over Makkah and be appointed as the guardian of the Ka'bah.

Makkah was the rendezvous of the caravans travelling between Yemen, Hirah, Syria and Najd, and through its proximity to the Red Sea, it connected the trade routes of the world. Qusayy therefore, brought his closest relatives to Makkah and settled them in the valley beside the Sanctuary, among them his brother Zuhrah, his uncle Taym, the son of another uncle, Mukhzum, and various other more distant cousins. Qusayy ruled over Makkah as a king with ever increasing influence, and the Khuza'ah tribe realised that should the guardianship of the Ka'bah remain forever in his hands, they would be in danger of losing their own position in the region. They thought therefore, to dispossess him of his guardianship, and thus, seeds of discord were sown.

In response, Qusayy called upon the tribe of Quraish, and after a consultation between them and a number of tribes from the surrounding areas, Qusayy was considered the most wise and powerful and his guardianship was endorsed and confirmed. As a result the tribe of Khuza'ah had to migrate from Makkah.

Qusayy had four sons, although Abd al Dar was the eldest of his children, his younger brother Abdu Manaf was more famous and respectable among the people. But Qusayy favoured his first born even though, he was the least capable of his children. Shortly before his death, he delegated the guardianship of the Ka'bah to Abd

al Dar and handed him the keys of the Sanctuary telling him: "O my son, I shall set you equal with the others even though the people have honoured them before you. No one shall enter the Ka'bah without you opening it for him, and no hand shall tie the flag of war for Quraish but yours, and no pilgrim shall draw water to drink in Makkah without your permission, nor shall he eat food except of you provision, nor shall Quraish resolve any matter except in your house."

Abd al Dar fulfilled the responsibilities his father had laid upon him and so did his sons after him. However, the sons of Abdu Manaf were more popular and had more public esteem, and in the following generation the people supported his son Hashim who, was clearly the most notable man of his time. They demanded the rights, be transferred from the family of Abd al Dar to his family.

Those who supported Hashim and his brothers were all descendants from Qusayy, with the exception of the older generation, as well as the descendants of Zuhruh and Taym. The descendants of Makhzum and the more distant cousins held that, the rights should be retained by the family of Abd al Dar.

The tribe of Quraish stood divided and emotions rose to a dangerous degree, until the women of the family of Abu Manaf brought a bowl of rich perfume and positioned it inside the Ka'bah, Hashim and his brothers and all their allies dipped their hands into it and took an oath of allegiance in which they swore that they would never abandon each other, then they rubbed their hands over the stones of the Ka'bah in confirmation of their pledge. The parties to this pact became known as the Scented Ones.

For their part, the descendants of Abd al Dar swore a similar oath and became known as the Confederates. The stage was thus set for conflict and a battle to death was about to ensue when a compromise was reached in which it was agreed that the descendants of Abdu Manaf, should have the rights of levying tax and providing the pilgrims with water, while the descendants of Abd al Dar, should retain the keys of the Ka'bah and their other rights, and the House would continue as the House of Assembly. Thus, the two parties lived in peace until the advent of Islam.

In deference to his superior position, Hashim's brothers agreed that he should have the responsibility of providing for the pilgrims. He called upon every member of the Quraish to contribute to the provision of food for the pilgrims, as the time of pilgrimage approached he would arise in the Assembly saying: "O men of Quraish, you are God's neighbours, the people of His House, and at this feast there comes to you God's visitors, the pilgrims to His House. They are the guests of God and no guests have such claim upon your generosity as His guests. If my wealth was sufficient alone, I would not lay this burden upon you."

Hashim discharged his duties well, and was held in great esteem both at home and in distant places. He did more than his duty demanded, in a year of drought he provided food for the whole population, saving them from a desperate fate. It was he too, who standardised the two great caravan trips which the traders made from Makkah every year. The caravan of the winter to the Yemen and the caravan of the summer to north west Arabia, Palestine and Syria, which was then under Byzantine rule as part of the Roman Empire. Under his wise leadership, Makkah prospered and was famed

throughout the Peninsula so that it soon became the acknowledged capital of Arabia.

Both trips traversed the ancient incense route, the first stop along the summer route was the oasis of Yathrib (Madinah). This oasis had once been mainly inhabited by Jews, but was now controlled by an Arab tribe from the south. However, the Jews were still a prosperous community there and maintained their religion. The Arabs of Yathrib had particular matriarchal customs and were collectively known as the children of Qaylah, after one of their female ancestors. They had subsequently branched into two main tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj so named after Qaylah's two sons.

Hashim, remained the uncontested chief of Makkah throughout his life and, on one of his trips to Syria he stopped in Yathrib where he noticed a noble women engaging in commerce with some of her agents. She was Salma, daughter of Amr of the family of Najjar, one of the most influential women of Khazraj. Hashim asked her to marry him and she consented on the condition that, she retained control of her affairs. She lived with him in Makkah for a while and then returned to Yathrib, where she bore him a son named Shaybah, whom she kept with her in Yathrib until he was some fourteen years of age. Hashim did not oppose this, for the climate was healthier in the oasis, and he would often stay there with them on his way to Syria.

It was on one of these trips that Hashim fell ill and died while at Gaza, in Palestine, where he was buried. He had two brothers Abdu Shams and Muttalib, Abdu Shams was the elder but he was too occupied in trading and was seldom in Makkah, so al Muttalib succeeded him in taking the rights of watering the pilgrims and of le-

vying the tax for their provisions.

With the passage of time, Muttalib, was faced with the question of who would succeed him in this post, his brother Hashim had three sons by other wives as well as Shaybah, and he had several sons of his own, but none of them could be compared to Shaybah, who had already established an excellent reputation for himself as a promising leader and reports of his gifted personality had begun to spread far afield from the oasis. Muttalib, decided to go and see Shaybah, who was by then a fully grown young man. He was impressed with him and sought Salma's permission to take him into his care.

At first, the youth's mother was reluctant, but undeterred Muttalib pointed out the advantages of his going to live in Yathrib, and the possibility that Shaybah would one day hold the office his father had held as guardian of the Sanctuary, which conferred upon the Quraish a higher rank and esteem than any other Arab tribe. To this purpose he must integrate with his people, as an exile could never hope to attain such a position. Finally, Salma agreed and Muttalib carried him back to Yathrib riding on his camel.

As they entered the city, Muttalib allowed the youth to preceede him on the camel so that some of the Quraish thought he was his servant, and called him 'Abd al Muttalib'. When Muttalib heard this he told them: "Away with you! He is no other than my brother's son." However, this mistake in Shaybah's identity brought about so much hilarity as it was related from one to the other, that he was never again referred to by his real name, but thereafter, affectionately known as Abd al Muttalib.

Soon after his arrival, Muttalib sought to return to his nephew the wealth which Hashim had left behind, and a dispute arose with his uncle Nawfal, but with the assistance of his guardian uncle and pressure brought to bear from his uncles in Yathrib, Abd al Muttalib was able to secure his rights. When several years later Muttalib died, Abd al Muttalib was assigned the offices which his father Hashim had held, no one was disappointed, nor did anyone dispute his qualifications for the office which he had displayed since his early years. He fulfilled his responsibilities of watering and feeding the pilgrims and even excelled beyond his father's and uncle's achievements.

Although the well of Zamzam had been destroyed, long before by the tribe of Jurhum, who had buried within it two golden gazelles and swords, the people of Yathrib still had memories of it although they no longer knew of its location. Water now had to be brought in from a number of wells on the outskirts of Yathrib and then, held in reservoirs close to the Ka'bah, this presented Abd al Muttalib with a monumental task as he had only one son at that time to assist him in this duty.

He used to love to be near the Ka'bah and would often have a bed prepared for himself, to sleep in the area which contained the tombs of Ismail and Hagar. One night, he had a vision as he slept in which he was told to dig Zamzam and he was shown a place in which was an ants nest, blood, dung and ravens. Since it was not known where the well was anymore, he sought inspiration as he walked around the Ka'bah at dawn until he found that place he had seen in the dream. He began to dig between the two idols, Isaf and Na'ilah until water sprang forth and the two golden gazelles and

swords of Mudad of the Jurhum tribe appeared.

Everyone claimed rights to share in the treasure and, Abd al Muttalib agreed that lots should be cast for each object, as to whether it should be retained in the sanctuary or be his property or be divided among the people. Thus, it was decided by the divining of arrows inside the Ka'bah and some of the treasure went to the Ka'bah, some to Abd al Muttalib but none of it went to the Quraish. It was also agreed that, the family of Hashim should care for Zamzam since it was their duty to water the pilgrims.

The years passed by and Abd al Muttalib eventually had ten sons, the youngest of them was Abd Allah who grew up and married Aminah, the daughter of Wahb of the Quraish. Only a few months after their marriage, Abd Allah travelled with a trade caravan to Syria, on his return to Makkah he became ill and rested in Yathrib to recover. The caravan went on without him and when it arrived back in Makkah, Abd al Muttalib sent his brother al Harith to fetch him from Yathrib, however, when al Harith reached Yathrib it was too late, Abd Allah had already died there.

Aminah was expecting a child and gave birth to a son, after the death of her husband Abd Allah, this child was Mohammed, who was to be the Messenger of God (prayers and peace be upon him).

Thus, Abd al Muttalib was the father of Abd Allah, the father of the Prophet, and of Abu Talib, who was the father of the Rightly Guided Caliph Ali Ibn Abu Talib. The four Rightly Guided Caliphs shared a common heritage, they were all descendants from the Tribe of Quraish, and they were all joined to the family of the Prophet at various times in their respective lineage's.

The First Caliph

ABU BAKR AL-SIDDIQ

(May Allah be pleased with him)

Caliphate period:- 11 H. to 13 H. [632 to 634 C.E.]

The Caliph Abu Bakr Al Siddiq said:

"Long for death and prepare for it as best as you can, and life shall become for you like a generous gift."

"The behaviour of the best of the servants of God shows itself in four ways: he rejoices when a sinner repents, he implores God to pardon those who do not even dream of repentance, he prays God to come to the aid of the unfortunate and he helps all who do good."

CHAPTER ONE

Ancestry

The first Caliph, was known in history by many names, the most famous one being, Abu Bakr Al Siddiq followed by Abdallah and Atiq (May Allah be pleased with him). He was born in Makkah in the year 573 C.E. (Christian Era), two years after the birth of the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him). He was from the Bani Taym of the Tribe of Quraish. His lineage joins with that of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) six generations before himself. His proper name was Abdallah but, he was called Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) and became so well known by this appellation that most people did not know his real name. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), conferred the title of "Al Siddiq" (The Truthful) upon him after he embraced Islam. His father's name was Uthman and he was known by the epithet of Abu Quhafah. His mother, Salma, was known by her patronymic name of Umm al Khair.

Early Life

From his childhood, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) was a quiet and sincere man. He was scrupulously honest and truthful, because of his impeccable character, from an early age he was the Prophet's closest and life long friend. He was a gentle hearted man who keenly felt the suffering and misery of others, he used to help the poor and the needy, the distressed and downtrodden. Even before embracing Islam, he disliked most of

the customs prevalent in the days of ignorance and never drank any alcohol.

He was a trader by profession and often used to accompany the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) on his trading missions. Because he was renowned for his honesty, people trusted him and frequently left their money as a trust with him. His nobility and truthfulness soon made him a successful and wealthy trader, before long, these same qualities were to serve him well in the noble cause of God.

Acceptance of Islam

Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) was a steadfast friend of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and knew him better than any other man. His honesty, nobility, truthfulness and trustworthiness impressed Abu Bakr immensely, he knew him to be worthy of his trust. When the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) confided in him secretly about, the vision he had seen and the Revelation of God he had heard, Abu Bakr accepted it immediately without the slightest hesitation. In this way, he was the first adult free man to respond to the Prophet's call and to believe in the Prophet Mohammed's mission, and thus, became his confidant. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) once spoke about this, saying: "When I invited people to God, everyone pondered over it and hesitated, at least momentarily, except for Abu Bakr, who accepted my call the moment I put it before him, and he did not hesitate even for a moment." When he embraced Islam, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was overjoyed. But what soul would hesitate to abandon the worship of idols for the worship

of God alone if it were open at all to the voice of truth? What soul would prefer the worship of stones to the worship of God alone if it were endowed with any kind of nobility and transcendent awareness? What soul would resist self-purification, giving of one's bounty and doing good to the orphan, if it had any degree of innate purity and goodness?

Da'wah

Abu Bakr started the work of Da'wah (Invitation to God) as soon as he had become Muslim, at first secretly, and then openly, when the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) permitted it. Abu Bakr broadcast his conversion and new faith in God and in his Prophet among his Companions. He was known as a good man and a noble character, friendly to his people, amiable and gentle. He enjoyed the noblest lineage in Quraish and was the most knowledgeable of its clans and genealogies and its past and present history. Better than any other member of the tribe, he knew its strengths and weaknesses. His people loved him and respected him for his knowledge, his honesty and his entertaining conversation. Abu Bakr began to call to Islam, those of his people whom he trusted and, a number of them reverted. (the word 'revert' is used rather than 'convert' since everyone was Muslim i.e. submitted to the will of God, at the time of the Creation when God took humanity's oath of their submission to Him.)

He first went to Uthman ibn Affan, Talhah ibn Ubayd Allah, Zubayr ibn Awwam and Sa'd ibn Abu Waqqas (may Allah be pleased with them). They embraced Islam upon his preaching, the next day, he went to Uthman ibn Maz'un, Abu Ubaydah ibn al Jar-

rah, Abd al Rahman ibn Auf and some other prominent Quraish. They too accepted Islam at his hands. In the first instance, eight prominent figures embraced Islam at the invitation of Abu Bakr al Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him). Whenever a man reverted to Islam, he would seek the Prophet and declare his Islam to him and receive from him his instruction. Fearful of arousing the enmity and antagonism of Quraish, for their departure from idol worship, the new Muslims used to hide the fact of their conversion. They would go to the outskirts of Makkah in order to hold their prayers. For three years, while Islam continued to spread among the Makkans, the Muslims continued to hide.

In the meantime, the Qur'an was continually being revealed to Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) and this, fortified the Muslims in their faith and confirmed them in it. In this way, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) was the first Muslim, after the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), to preach Islam and to invite people to God, in this he was most fruitful. The main reason for his success was his popularity among the Makkans because of his reputation of honesty, nobility, trustworthiness, good morals and fair dealing.

The personal example of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was the best support for the spread of his cause. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was merciful and charitable, humble yet manly, sweet of word yet just, giving each his due yet full of compassion and sympathy for the weak, the orphan, the deprived and the oppressed. In his night vigil and prayer, in his reciting of the Qur'an revealed to him, in his constant scrutinising of the heavens and the earth, he looked for the meaning of their exis-

tence and that of everything they contain; in his permanent orientation towards God alone, in his search for the meaning and existence and quintessence of life, deep within his own soul, he provided such an example for his followers that they became ever more convinced of their faith and, ever more anxious to adhere to its precepts.

However, the new Muslims did so, notwithstanding the fact that they were repudiating the creed and practice of their ancestors as well as exposing themselves to injury, by those who believed otherwise. In spite of the great respect Abu Bakr was given, he was not spared the harassment of the unbelievers of Makkah who, did their utmost against him.

Suffering in the Cause of Da'wah

As the number of Muslims rose to thirty nine, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) asked the Prophet's permission to invite the people openly. After persisting in this request, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) gave his consent and they all went to the Haram (the Ka'bah) for Tabligh (preaching). Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) delivered a Khutbah (sermon) which, was the first ever in the annals of Islam. Hamzah ibn Abd al Muttalib, the Prophet's uncle, embraced Islam that same day. When the unbelievers and idolaters from among the Quraish heard it, they fell upon the Muslims from all sides. Even though he was considered to be the noblest and most respectable of all people in Makkah, Abu Bakr was beaten to such an extent that his nose and ears were badly mauled and his entire face was besmeared with blood. He was kicked, thrashed with shoes, trampled under foot and

handled most roughly and savagely until he fell unconscious and was near death. When he at last regained consciousness in the evening, he immediately enquired: "How is the Prophet?" In spite of his injuries, his first thoughts were only for the Prophet, his love and respect for him was so unbounded, he concerned himself with nothing but the Prophet's well-being.

Abu Bakr al Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) served Islam in numerous ways. The Quraish, cruelly persecuted a number of slaves who had embraced Islam, and made their lives unbearable for them. Muslim slaves suffered greatly at the hands of the non-Muslim master. One such slave was the Abysinnian Bilal, who is one of the best known in the galaxy of Companions of the Prophet, (prayers and peace be upon him). His master, Umayyah Ibn Khalaf lashed him at night and made him lie on the burning sand during the day, pinning him down with a heavy rock upon his chest when he knew of Bilal's conversion to Islam. Bearing himself gallantly under this torture, Bilal kept on repeating "God is One, God is One." Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) saw him and bought him his freedom, thus Bilal became a free Muslim. Indeed, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) had already set many other Muslim slaves free, the first one being Amir Ibn Fuhayrah, a man of great spiritual strength. Amir, was a shepherd and upon his freedom he took care of Abu Bakr's flocks. Nazirah, Nahdiah, Jariah, Bani Momil and Bint Nahdiah numbered among others. He spent much of his wealth upon the new reverts.

Among the most relentless of the persecutors, was Abu Jahl. If a revert had a powerful family to defend him, Abu Jahl would merely insult him and promise to ruin his reputation and make him a laughing stock. If he was a merchant, he would threaten to stop his

trade by organising a general boycott of his goods so that, he would be ruined. If he were weak and unprotected and of his own clan, he would have him tortured; and he had powerful allies in many other clans whom he could persuade to do the same with their own weak and unprotected reverts. Abu Bakr became more and more hard pressed by the unbelievers of Makkah who increased the intensity of their persecution of the Muslims. He was on, increasingly bad terms with Bilal's former master Umayyah, the chief of Jumah, amongst whom he lived; and the time came when he felt he had no alternative but to emigrate. In the fifth year of his mission, he sought the Prophet's permission to migrate to Abyssinia with other Muslims, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) acceeded to his request and, he set out to join those already in Abyssinia. But before he reached the Red Sea, he encountered Ibn ad Dughunnah, at that time the chief of the Qara tribe not far from Makkah who were allies of the Quraish. This Bedouin chief had known Abu Bakr well in his days of affluence and influence, yet now he had the appearance of a wandering hermit, Amazed at this change he questioned him, Abu Bakr explained: "My people have mistreated me and driven me out, and all I seek is to travel over the face of the earth worshipping God." Ibn ad Dughunnah queried: "Why have they done this? You are as an ornament to your clan, a help in misfortune, a doer of right, ever fulfilling the needs of others. Return, you are under my protection." So he took him back to Makkah and spoke to the people saying: "Men of Quraish, I have pledged my protection to the son of Abu Quhafah, so let no one treat him other than well." Quraish. confirmed the protection and promised that Abu Bakr should be safe, but at the instigation of the Bani Jumah they said to his protector: "Tell him to worship his Lord within

closed doors, and to pray and recite what he will therein, but tell him not to cause us trouble by letting it be seen and heard, for his appearance is striking and he has a way with him, so that we fear in case he should sway our sons and our women." Ibn ad Dughunnah conveyed this to Abu Bakr, and for a while, he prayed only in his house and made there his recitations of the Qur'an, and for a while, the tension was relaxed between him and the leaders of the Bani Jumah.

The Award of 'Al Siddiq'

In the tenth year of his mission, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was lifted to the Throne of God Almighty (Mi'raj). He went to the Mosque and recounted his night journey to the people in the morning. His enemies were immediately triumphant, for now, they felt they had an irrefutable cause for mockery. Even the children of Quraish knew that a caravan takes a month to go from Makkah to Syria and a month to return. And now, Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) was claiming that he went there and back in one night. Some of them went to Abu Bakr and said: "Have you heard your friend, he is claiming that he visited Jerusalem and prayed there and was raised to the Sublime Throne in the heavens last night and talked with God Almighty and, then returned to Makkah, do you believe it?" Abu Bakr accused them of lying, but they assured him that Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) was in the Mosque at that very moment speaking about the journey. Abu Bakr, immediately responded: "If he says so, then it is true. And why should I wonder at it, he tells me that tidings come to him from Heaven to earth in one hour of the day or night,

and I know him to be speaking the truth. And this is what you quibble about." Then he went to the Mosque to repeat his confirmation. Because of this, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) named him "al Siddiq", which means "the great witness of truth" or "the great confirmer of the truth".

Visions

Meanwhile, the Prophet continued to visit Abu Bakr regularly at his house amongst the dwellings of the Bani Jumah. The memory of these visits was indelibly etched on the mind of Aishah, Abu Bakr's youngest daughter. She never remembered a time when her parents were not Muslims, or when the Prophet did not visit them every day. In the same year that followed Khadijah's death, the Prophet dreamt that he saw a man carrying a form wrapped in silk. In the dream, the man told him that this is his wife and ordered him to uncover her. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) raised up the silk and saw Aishah. At that time, Aishah was only six years old, and the Prophet fifty. Abu Bakr had already promised Aishah to Mut'im for his son Jubayr. So the Prophet told himself: "If this is from God, He will bring it to pass." Some nights later, he dreamt he saw an angel carrying the same bundle of silk, and this time he asked the angel: "Show me." The angel raised the silk and again there was Aishah, and once more the Prophet said: "If this is from God, He will bring it to pass." The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) did not mention these dreams to anyone, not even to Abu Bakr, however, their confirmation came when Khawlah, the wife of Uthman ibn Maz'un, who was attending to the needs of the Prophet's house as she had regularly done since Khadi-

jah's death, one day suggested that the Prophet should marry either Aishah daughter of Abu Bakr, or Sawdah the daughter of Zam'ah, who had returned to Makkah from Abysinnia and was recently widowed. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) told Khawlah to seek to arrange marriage to both the brides she had suggested; Sawdah sent back her acceptance of his proposal and she was given in marriage to the Prophet by her brother in law Hatib, who had also recently returned from Abysinnia. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr persuaded Mut'im to forgo the arrangement of his son's marriage to Aishah and, she was betrothed to the Prophet some months later through a marriage contracted between her father and the Prophet. However, because of her young age, Aishah continued to live with her parents.

Construction of the Prophet's Mosque

It was around this time that Abu Bakr resolved to build a small mosque at the front of his house. He constructed it with a roof open to the sky and surrounded it with low walls, so that when he stood there to pray and recite the Qur'an, passers by would see and hear his recitation and his reverence for the revealed Book. The sight of his praising was so moving that, Umayyah feared still more people of Makkah would revert to Islam, so he sent a delegation from the leaders of Quraish to Ibn ad Dughunnah to remind him of the conditions attached to their initial agreement about his protection, arguing that because the walls of Abu Bakr's mosque were so low, it did not qualify as part of his house, nor was he praying behind closed doors. They insisted that, if he persisted in praying so openly, they wished to be absolved from their commitment under Ibn ad

Dughunnah's protection. Abu Bakr refused to abandon his mosque and relieved Ibn ad Dughunnah from his promise of protection, telling him that he needed no protection other than the protection of God.

Tidings of Flight

That same day, the Prophet told Abu Bakr that he had had a vision of a place to which they would emigrate, a place between two tracts of black stones, a well watered fertile land, abundant in date palms.

When the Prophet discovered that the Quraish were plotting to kill him, the angel Gabriel came to him and told him what he should do. It was noon, an unusual time for visiting, but the Prophet went straight to the house of Abu Bakr who knew at once, as soon as he saw him at that hour, that something important had happened. Aishah and her elder sister Asma were with their father when the Prophet came in. "God has allowed me to leave the city and to emigrate," he said. "Together with me?" Abu Bakr asked. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) answered: "Together with you." Aishah was then in her seventh year. She used to recall afterwards: "I never knew before that time that anyone could weep for joy until I saw Abu Bakr weep at those words."

Refuge in the Cave

When they had made their plans, the Prophet returned to his house and told Ali ibn Abu Talib that, he was about to leave for Yathrib (Madinah), bidding him to remain behind in Makkah until he had given back to their owners all the goods which had been de-

posited in their house for safe keeping. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) had never ceased to be known as al-Amin, (the trustworthy) and there were still many disbelievers who would trust him with their property as they would trust no one else. He also told Ali what Gabriel had told him, about the plot Quraish had made against him. The would-be assassins had blockaded the Prophet's house and waited outside his gate after nightfall. But while they were waiting, they heard the sound of women's voices coming from the house, the voices of Sawdah, Umm Kalthum, Fatimah and Umm Ayman, that gave them cause to think; and one of the men said that if they climbed over the wall and broke into the house, their names would be forever held in dishonour among the Arabs because they had violated the privacy of women. So they decided to wait until their intended victim came out, as he usually did, in the early hours of the morning. Aware of their presence, the Prophet asked Ali ibn Abu Talib to sleep in his bed covered with his green Hadrami mantle. He then began to recite the Surah that is named after its opening letters, 'Ya Sin'; and when he came to the words: And We have enshrouded them, so that they do not see, he left the house just before dawn, and God took their sight away so that they did not see him, and he passed through their midst and went on his way. The young men of Quraish waiting to kill the Prophet, looked through a hole in the door and supposed it to be the Prophet sleeping in his bed. Meantime, the Prophet picked up Abu Bakr at the latter's house and from there proceeded through a back door to where two camels were waiting for them and made their way southward toward the cave of Thawr, in the direction of Yemen. They lay hidden in the cave of Thaur for three days, the incident is described in the Glorious Qur'an as follows:-

"...when the unbelievers expelled him, he and another, when the two of them were in the cave, he said to his companion, "Be not distressed, indeed God is with us". Then God sent down on him His serenity and strengthened him with Unseen forces..."

(Surah 9 verse 40)

No one knew of their hiding place except Abd Allah, son of Abu Bakr, his two sisters, Aishah and Asma, and their servant Amir ibn Fuhayrah. Abd Allah spent his day in Makkah, listening to what the Quraish said and plotted about the Prophet and then, returned to the cave to report what he had heard under the cover of night. Amir grazed the sheep of Abu Bakr and passed by the cave in the evening in order to give them some milk and meat. Upon Abd Allah's return from the cave, Amir would follow him with all his sheep and then conceal any trace of his steps. For three long days, the pair remained in the cave and the Quraish persistently looked for them to no avail. For the Quraish, it was absolutely necessary to find the Prophet and to prevent his emigration to Yathrib (Madinah). Meanwhile, Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) spent most of his time praying to God and invoking His blessings, and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) continually sought to find out, whether they were being discovered and to look after their security.

The young men of Quraish who were chosen to kill the Prophet, (prayers and peace be upon him) continued their search and came close to the cave, fully armed and ready for the kill. When they found a shepherd in the vicinity they asked him about the Prophet and Abu Bakr. He answered: "Perhaps they are within the cave, although I have not seen anyone go in or out." When he heard the

shepherd's answer, Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) t embled with fear and expected the Quraish to break into the cave at any moment. He drew back into a corner and, trusting in God, remained motionless. Some members of the Quraish party climbed up to the cave, and the foremost among them turned round as soon as he saw the entrance. His companions asked him: "Why have you not gone into the cave?" He replied: "Its entrance is covered with cobwebs, and there is a pair of wild pigeons on the threshold. Obviously, no one could have gone in without disturbing the pigeons and destroying the cobwebs." At that moment, the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) prayed while Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) continued to shake with fear. To Abu Bakr, who pressed ever closer to the Prophet, the latter whispered: "Do not worry, God is with us." The party from Quraish turned away and called one another to leave for Makkah. Abu Bakr's faith in God and His Prophet became yet stronger.

Arrival in Madinah

On Monday 27 th September 622 C.E, Abu Bakr and the Prophet reached the oasis in Quba, there, the Prophet received messages that the people of Madinah were anticipating his arrival with impatience, so he rested there for just three days, however, he did not leave before laying the foundations of the first mosque to be built in Islam. Setting out on Friday morning, he and his Companions broke their journey in the valley of Ranuna where they prayed the noon time prayer with members of the Khazirate clan of the Bani Salim, who had been awaiting his arrival. After the prayer, the Prophet mounted his camel, Qaswa, and together with Abu Bakr

and others of Quraish also mounted upon their beasts, they set off in the direction of the city. As they entered the environs of Madinah, escorted by a guard of honour from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj, cries of joy began to be raised throughout the city: "The Prophet of God has come! The Prophet of God has come!" Many of the people mistook Abu Bakr as the Prophet, on seeing this, Abu Bakr stood up and spread a sheet over the head of the Prophet to protect him from the burning rays of the sun. At this, the Madinese recognised the Prophet.

Not long after his arrival in Madinah, the Prophet received the following Revelation:-

"Permission to fight back is given to those who have been oppressed, and surely God is Most Powerful to bring their victory- * Those who were expelled from their homes unjustly, only that they say: "Our Lord is God". Had God not repelled one people by means of another, there would have been destroyed cloisters, monasteries, temples, and mosques, in which the Name of God is much mentioned. And surely God will help those who stand in His Cause; surely God is All-Powerful, Almighty."

(Qur'an Surah 22 verses 39-40)

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) was well aware that the permission to fight, given in these verses, was indeed a command. A previous Revelation had said:-

"So give respite to the unbelievers, leave them for a while."

(Qur'an Surah 86 verse 17)

The respite was at an end and now, God had declared war upon Quraish, the Prophet was therefore, obliged to confront them with

all means at his disposal to impress upon them, that they would be given respite no more until they had submitted to the will of God. Another Revelation confirmed this obligation:-

"And fight them until there is no more persecution and the Religion prescribed by God is fully established. Then if they dess-ist, surely God is All-Seeing of what they do."

(Qur'an Surah 8 verse 39)

Thus, the Islamic position on war and fighting was revealed, and in consequence to this Revelation fighting was permitted, but only against those who seek to compel the Muslims to renounce their religion and, stand in the way of calling mankind to God. The Quraish, sought every opportunity to stir the entire peninsula against the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) and, he became convinced that there was no hope of reaching any kind of agreement with them.

Battle of Badr

Initially, there was little possibility of any action other than raids, the Quraish were vulnerable in their caravans and toward the beginning of autumn of the second year, H. Abu Sufyan led a great caravan toward Syria, the caravan slipped by the Muslims on its outward journey but they knew upon its return, it would pass nearby Madinah. The Prophet, (prayers and peace be upon him) called upon the Muslims to mobilise their forces and to seek to capture the caravan, some responded and others did not. They set out from Madinah on the eighth of Ramadan 2 H. with seventy camels to which three or four men were appointed. Abu Bakr, Umar and Abd

al Rahman shared one camel between them. The Muslim force consisted of three hundred and five men in all. Upon reaching the valley of Dhafiran, where they had encamped, they received news that Abu Sufyan had come out with a considerable force to meet them and to protect the caravan. It was clearly no more, to be merely a question of intercepting the caravan.

With the prospect of a major confrontation at hand, the Prophet consulted members of the expedition for their opinion, including Abu Bakr, who spoke for the Emigrants in favour of advancing. They had hoped to attack the caravan and return to Madinah before the army of Abu Sufyan arrived. The Prophet, (prayers and peace be upon him) rode on ahead with Abu Bakr and obtained news that the Makkan army was already close at hand. He returned to the camp and on the following morning, while the Muslims were still awaiting the arrival of the caravan, they received news that the caravan had passed them by on a different route and escaped. While they debated whether to return to Madinah or to force a showdown with the Quraish army, the following verse was revealed:-

"And when God promised you that one of the two hosts would fall to you, you wished that the weaker host should fall to you, but God wishes to confirm the Truth by His Word, and to cut the roots of the disbelievers." (Qur'an Surah 8 verse 7)

The Muslims resolved to stand firm in case of an enemy attack. Quraish had begun to advance, a booth was prepared for the Prophet and, he returned to the shelter with Abu Bakr and prayed for the help which God had promised. He turned his face to Makkah and his whole soul to God, calling on Him to give him victory, Abu Bakr was constantly at his side at this difficult time, while the

Prophet anxiously repeated the words: "O God, Quraish has come with all its force, O God give us Your help which You promised, O God, if this small army perishes, when will You be worshipped again?" As the Prophet prayed with hands outstretched his mantle slipped from his shoulders and Abu Bakr attentively picked it up and, covered the Prophet again and again. At last, Abu Bakr said to the Prophet: "O Prophet, surely it is enough calling upon God, He will certainly give you what He has promised." The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) continued to pray intensely for God to assist him in this hour of impending danger. After almost collapsing, he awoke from a light slumber and with a radiant face told Abu Bakr, that he had had a vision of victory from God, saying: "Take heart! The help of God has come, Gabriel is leading his horse in his hand and he is armed for battle." He went out to his men and urged them to enter the battle without fear, going to them one by one he said: "By Him who controls Mohammed's soul, not one of you fights today and falls but God will admit him to Paradise."

Abu Bakr was like a shadow beside the Prophet, in the midst of the battlefield, his faithfulness was shown in an incident when his own son, who had not embraced Islam at that time, was fighting with the Quraish against the Muslims. Later, his son was to tell him that he had twice found his father under his sword at Badr but could not raise his hand out of his love for him, to which Abu Bakr told his son: "I would have killed you."

Abu Bakr's even compassion was clearly demonstrated when, after the Quraish had been utterly routed there was the matter of the captives to be dealt with. The Prophet (prayers and peace be

upon him), sought the advice of the Muslims on what was to be done with them. The captives sent word to Abu Bakr, knowing him to be the nearest to the Quraish and the most compassionate and merciful of the Muslims as well as being the closest friend and advisor of the Prophet. They told him: "O Abu Bakr, among us are fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins of the Muslims, even the most distant of us is still a relative. Approach your friend on our behalf and ask him to forgive us or allow us to be ransomed."

Abu Bakr promised them that he would do his best. He appealed to the Prophet's gentleness and stirred his compassion, pleading: "O Prophet of God, you are dearer to me than my father and my mother. Your captives consist of men who are parents, sons, cousins, uncles and brothers of your own people. The most removed of them is still a member of your clan and a blood relative, be good to them and forgive them. God will forgive you and be good to you. Or otherwise, allow them to be ransomed and take from them that which would increase the Muslims in power. Perhaps by such action, God will soften their hearts to Islam." The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) listened to Abu Bakr's eloquent speech, and although he was inclined to his view, he did not answer. Then, Umar ibn al Khattab pleaded with the Prophet, urging him to spare no compassion for them and to strike their necks. Once more, Abu Bakr returned and pleaded for their lives, and after the Prophet had withdrawn to his room to ponder the matter alone, he emerged to find the Muslims divided between Umar's and Abu Bakr's views.

The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) consulted the believers again and, characterised both Abu Bakr and Umar. He li-

kened Abu Bakr to Michael, a carrier of God's pleasure and forgiveness and compared him to the Prophets like Ibrahim, who was sweeter to his people than honey, even when Ibrahim's people had condemned him to the fire all he said to them was:

"A shame on you and that you worship other than God, have you no understanding? My Lord, they have led many people astray, then whoever follows me he is surely of me, and whoever disobeys me, indeed You are All-Forgiving Most Merciful."

(Qur'an Surah 21 verse 67 & Surah 14 verse 36)

He likened Abu Bakr also to Jesus when he said:

"If You chastise them, they are Your servants, and if You forgive them, indeed You are the Almighty, the All-Wise."

(Qur'an Surah 5 verse 118)

While Umar, he likened to Gabriel, the carrier of God's wrath. From among the Prophets he is like Noah when he said:

"My Lord, leave not even one of the unbelievers upon the earth- (Qur'an Surah 71 verse 26)

or like Moses when he said:

"Our Lord, You have given to Pharaoh and his chiefs adornment and possessions in the life of this world. Our Lord, they misled (people) from Your Way, our Lord obliterate their possessions and harden their hearts so they will not believe until they see the grievous chastisement." (Qur'an Surah 10 verse 88) .

Then, turning to the Muslims, the Prophet said: "You have families to support. So do not let any of these captives escape from you, take a ransom from him, otherwise strike off his neck."

But later in the day, when Umar returned to the shelter, he found both the Prophet and Abu Bakr in tears because of a Revelation which the Prophet had just received:

"It is not fitting for a Prophet to take prisoners of war, but the unbelievers should be killed until they are wiped out from the land, and the believers have the upper hand. You desire the gains of this world, but God wishes for you the Hereafter, and God is Almighty, All-Wise." (Qur'an Surah 8 verse 67)

Then it was revealed to the Prophet that, his decision to spare the lives of the captives had been accepted, should not be revoked, as he was given the following message for the captives:-

"O Prophet! Say to those prisoners of war in your hands, "If God finds any good in your hearts, He will give you better than that which has been taken away from you, and will forgive you". And God is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. (Qur'an Surah 8 verse 70)

Family Ties

In anticipation of further hostilities, the Prophet deemed it necessary for him to strengthen his relationship with his fellow Muslims. Just as he had already married Aishah, the daughter of Abu Bakr, thus, he married Hafsah, daughter of Umar ibn al Khattab and in the same spirit gave his daughter Fatimah in marriage to Ali, his cousin. When the Prophet's daughter Ruqayyah passed away, he gave Uthman ibn Affan, her bereaved husband, his other daughter Umm Kulthum. Thus, he united in a bond of family and blood, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali.

Battle of Uhud

Meanwhile, Quraish were set upon revenge and had prepared a great army of three thousand men to march upon Madinah. There were varying opinions as to how Madinah should best be defended. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) himself, inclined to the view that it would be best to hold fast to the city and reinforce themselves within, thus, fighting on their own ground. Others among the younger men, desired to go out on the offensive and meet the enemy wherever they might be.

On Friday, they all assembled for the afternoon prayer, after the Prophet had led the assembly and informed the congregation that their victory depended upon their careful preparation and patience, he left with Abu Bakr and Umar and returned to his house where, they helped him dress into his armour and handed him his sword. During the battle of Uhud which ensued, Abu Bakr stood firm when some of the hypocrites among the Muslims had began to run off, to seize the booty thus, exposing the Prophet to the enemy, and after the Prophet was injured, Abu Bakr remained with him on the heights even though, almost all the men had fled to save their own skins. Led by Abu Bakr, the remaining Muslims reinforced a protective circle around the Prophet and moved him to safety further up the mountainside.

Abu Bakr leads the First Pilgrimage

On the ninth year of the Hijrah, the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr to lead the first Haj, this was the initial indication of the Prophet having chosen Abu Bakr to succeed him as Amir of the believers.

Abu Bakr led the caravan to Makkah, the Glorious Qur'an refers to this pilgrimage as The Great Haj because, it was the first ever in the history of Islam and, it marked the beginning of a new era of Islamic period and constitution. Abu Bakr proceeded to Makkah together with three hundred Muslims and instructed the people in the rites and rituals of the Haj. Together with Ali ibn Abu Talib, whom the Prophet had sent for that purpose, he gave a historic sermon to the pilgrims assembled at Arafat. He was entrusted with the duty of proclaiming the Commandments of God and His Prophet. When the two met, Abu Bakr asked: "Have you come to us as a commander or messenger?" Ali replied: "Indeed as a messenger." And he informed Abu Bakr of his mission. When the pilgrims congregated at Mina, Ali rose and delivered the following address quoting the Qur'an:

"A proclamation from God and His Messenger, to all people on the day of the Greater pilgrimage, "God and His Messenger are free of the treaty obligations made with the unbelievers, but if you (unbelievers) repent, that will be better for you, but if you turn away, know that you cannot frustrate the will of God. And warn the unbelievers of a severe chastisement" (Surah 9 verse 3)

Nomination as Imam of the Prophet's Mosque

Ever since his arrival in Madinah, the Prophet had himself led all the prayers at his Mosque, however, some months after his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage he fell ill, when his attacks of fever decreased, he managed to walk to the Mosque but felt too weak

to talk to his Companions or to listen to them. However, he came to hear of their gossip about his appointment of a very young man to take command of the coming campaign against Syria and, he felt it necessary to address the people on this matter.

After soothing his fever with seven goatskins of water, he went to the Mosque where, he urged the men to carry out the expedition under Usamah. He then fell silent for a while and said: "Has he not made the better choice who, when given the option of taking this world, the other world, or properly acquiescing in whatever is with God, chooses the last alternative?" The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) stopped speaking again, and the people were motionless. With his deep perception and sensitivity, Abu Bakr realised that the Prophet was referring here to himself. His loyalty to the Prophet and the profound feeling for his person overwhelmed Abu Bakr, he could not hold back his tears. Deeply moved and weeping he said: "O Mohammed, we would give you our own lives and the lives of our children!" Fearing the spread of Abu Bakr's contagious affection among the congregation, the Prophet said softly: "O Abu Bakr!" He then commanded all the gates of the Mosque to be closed, except the one which led to the quarters of Abu Bakr. When this was done, the Prophet spoke again, saying: "I do not know of anyone whose companionship I would prefer. Of all people in the world, I would choose Abu Bakr as a permanent friend and constant companion. His, has been the friendship and fraternity of true faith. And it will last until God brings us together again."

The next day, the Prophet tried to raise himself out of bed to lead the prayers in the Mosque as usual, but when he found he could not, he ordered Abu Bakr to lead the prayers instead. His

daughter Aishah was anxious for her husband to lead the prayers himself, so she pleaded with the Prophet, to excuse her father saying that Abu Bakr's voice was too soft and that he would break down and cry when he recited the Qur'an. Again and again, the Prophet ordered that Abu Bakr lead the prayers, and twice more Aishah objected until the Prophet reprimanded Aishah with the words: "Indeed! You are all alike to the women of Joseph! Order Abu Bakr to lead the prayers immediately!"

This incident convinced the people, that the Prophet had indeed appointed Abu Bakr as his successor, as the leadership of prayers was a high office not given to anyone in the presence of the Prophet.

The Prophet's fever had risen and subsided for several days until on the morning of Monday the 12 th of Rabi I, in the eleventh year of Islam (June 8th, 632 C.E.), the Prophet rose after a peaceful night and although exceedingly weak, managed to go to the Mosque. Abu Bakr was leading the prayer when he entered and as the Muslims saw the Prophet come in, they were so overjoyed at his appearance that they almost went out of their prayer. Abu Bakr raised his voice in the recitation, to indicate that the prayer must continue without interruption. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him), was well pleased when he saw this. As the Prophet came near Abu Bakr to join in the prayer, Abu Bakr moved aside to allow the Prophet to take over, but the Prophet pushed him back into place saying: "You lead." He sat beside Abu Bakr and prayed while seated. When he had finished, he joined the congregation and spoke to them in a clear voice which was audible even outside the walls of the Mosque. He said to them: "O men, the fire is ready.

Subversive attacks are advancing like the waves of darkness. By God, I shall not be held responsible for any of this. I have never allowed anything but that which the Qur'an has made legitimate, and I have never forbidden anything which the Qur'an has not forbidden. God's curse is upon those who take graves for their mosques."

CHAPTER TWO

The First 'Siddiq' and the First Caliph

Caliphate

(Khilafah)

The Muslims were overjoyed at the Prophet's apparent recovery. Abu Bakr approached the Prophet asking: "O Prophet of God, it is clear that God has granted you His blessing and given you good health, just as we all wished and prayed. I had promised Habibah (his wife), to spend the day with her, may I take leave of you?" The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) granted him leave, and Abu Bakr went to al Sunh on the outskirts of Madinah, where his wife was living. There it was, that Abu Bakr received the news that the Prophet had died. He returned immediately to Madinah and on arriving, looked through the door of the Mosque where he saw Umar addressing a great throng of the Muslims, he did not delay himself there, but went straight to the quarters of Aishah and asked permission to enter. He was told that no permission was needed. Abu Bakr entered the apartment and found the Prophet laid down in a corner covered with a striped cloth. He approached, uncovered the face and kissed it, saying: "How wholesome you are whether alive or dead!" He then held the Prophet's head in his hands and looked closely at the face, which showed no sign of the agonies of death. Laying it down again he said: "Dearer to me than my father and mother. What would I not have sacrificed for you! The one death which God has decreed for you, as for any other man, to taste, you have now tasted. After this no death shall ever befall

you." He reverently covered the head with the striped cloth and went straight to the Mosque, where Umar was still proclaiming loudly that the Prophet had not died. The crowds made way for him and he moved forward closer to Umar and told him: "Gently, O Umar! Keep silent!" But Umar would not stop talking and continued repeating the same claim. Abu Bakr rose and made a sign to the people that he wished to address them. Recognising the voice of Abu Bakr, the people hastened to respond to his call and moved away from Umar.

After praising and thanking God, Abu Bakr delivered the following address: "O men, If you have been worshipping Mohammed, then know that Mohammed is dead. But if you have been worshipping God, then know that God is living and never dies." He then recited the Qur'anic verse:-

"And Mohammed is but a Messenger, Messengers have passed away before him. So if he died or was killed, would you then turn back to disbelief? Whoever turns back to disbelief does no harm to God, but God will reward the grateful."

(Surah 3 verse 144)

The people listened, as if they had never heard of the revelation of this verse until Abu Bakr recited it that day. They all repeated it. Umar later said: "When I heard Abu Bakr recite that verse, I was so astonished that I fell to the ground. My legs failed to carry me, and I knew that the Messenger of God had died."

Abu Bakr Receives Fealty as First Caliph

While the Muhajirun gathered around Abu Bakr, word reached

him that, the Ansar were gathering around Sa'd ibn Ubadah and debating the question of where the authority should lie now that the Prophet was dead. Umar urged Abu Bakr to go to the assembly. Sa'd was lying ill in the Centre of the hall wrapped in a cloak. As Abu Bakr and his Companions arrived, one of the Ansar rose saying: "We are the Ansar and the army of God, you the Muhajirun, are only a brigade in the army, further more some of you have sought to deprive us of our natural right to leadership." Abu Bakr spoke resolutely in reply, praising the Ansar but pointing out that the community of Islam was now spread throughout Arabia, and that the Arabs, as a whole, would not accept the authority of anyone other, than a man of Quraish, for Quraish held a unique and central position among them. Taking the hand of Umar ibn Khattab as well as that of Abu Ubaydah ibn al Jarrah, who were sitting either side of him, Abu Bakr said: "Either one of these two is acceptable to us as leader of the Muslim community. Pledge allegiance to whichever you will!" At this a heated argument broke out and Umar intervened saying: "O Ansar, you know that the Prophet ordered Abu Bakr to lead the prayer." And he seized Abu Bakr's hand a pledged allegiance to him, followed by Abu Ubaydah and then by all the Ansar except Sa'd, who never acknowledged him as Caliph.

The next day in the Mosque in Madinah, before Abu Bakr led the prayer, Umar rose and addressed the assembly, he bade them pledge their allegiance to Abu Bakr. All men rose and pledged their loyalty to Abu Bakr. Then Abu Bakr rose and delivered a speech saying:

"You have elected me to be your first Caliph, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me, and if I do wrong, redress me. Truthfulness is loyalty and disregard for truth is treason. The weak

among you shall be strong in my regard, until I have restored their rights, if God pleases; and the strong among you shall be weak in my sight until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God pleases. Obey me as long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God or His Messenger you own me no allegiance. Arise for the prayer, God have mercy upon you."

In this address, Abu Bakr demonstrated the role of an exemplary Caliph of Islamic government.

Abu Bakr Establishes his Authority

After the death of the Prophet, Abu Bakr faced many problems and was beset by much confusion. The Arabs, who on all sides were rising in rebellion, apostasy and disaffection began to raise their heads. In turn, the Christians and Jews were filled with unrest. Some of the Muslim tribes refused to pay Zakat (poor tax) to the Caliph for Bait al Mal (The Public Treasury) and some disbelievers, declared themselves to be prophets. Abu Bakr faced all these with unparalleled courage and the highest degree of faith, the characteristic which entitled Abu Bakr to be known as a "Siddiq", is mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an in the following verse:-

"And whoever obeys God and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the grace of God, of the Prophets, and the truthful, and the martyrs, and the righteous, and these are the best companions. " (Surah 4 verse 69)

The Expedition of Usamah

One of the first tasks set before Abu Bakr was, to despatch the

expedition against the Syrians, which had been postponed upon the Prophet's demise. Usamah ibn Zaid, son of Zaid ibn Harithah, the Prophet's freed slave and ward, had been appointed by the Prophet to lead this expedition, in order to avenge the death of his father at the hands of the Syrians at Mautah in the year 8 H. Usamah, had been about to leave when the news of the death of the Prophet reached him. This was a most critical juncture in Islamic history, with the entire peninsula in a state of agitation and disorder. Many of the tribes had only recently entered the fold of Islam and some, who were not firm in their faith among the newly reverted, thought that Islam would cease to exist upon the Prophet's passing away. Their condition had been predicted in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an:-

"The Bedouin say: "We believe". Say: "You do not believe, but say: "We submit to the will of God" (we have become Muslim) for belief has not yet entered your hearts, and if you obey God and His Messenger, He will not diminish anything of your deeds. Indeed God is All-Forgiving Most Merciful".

(Surah 49 verse 14)

At the same time that Abu Bakr was occupied with the departure of the expedition against Syria, he received news in Madinah that, apostates under the command of a false prophet were planning to attack the town, he was now faced with a new dilemma, should he despatch the troops out of Madinah where they would be needed in defence of the town. Some of the Companions urged him to postpone the expedition once more, but Abu Bakr proved himself yet again, in standing firm in his decision to uphold the Prophet's directives. He told the Companions resolutely: "How could I fold

up the flag which was unfurled by the Prophet himself?" Some of the Muslims, then requested Abu Bakr to give command of the force to someone else, claiming that Usamah, being only twenty years old, was too young and inexperienced to lead such an expedition. Hearing this, Abu Bakr was much annoyed and responded: "Do you wish for me to dismiss a man who was appointed by the Messenger of God?"

All was now set and, the army led by Usamah, rode out of Madinah only three weeks after the demise of the Prophet, among their number was, Umar. Abu Bakr sought Usamah's permission to remain in Madinah and he assented, however, Abu Bakr went some distance out of Madinah with the army to bid them farewell, Usamah riding his horse and Abu Bakr walking by his side. Forty days later, Usamah returned to Madinah victorious, a victory realised by the sincere faith of Abu Bakr.

As a result of the success of Usamah's expedition, many of the tribes who had vainly thought Islam to be dying out after the Prophet's departure from this life, now confidently returned to Islam.

Meanwhile some of the disbelievers declared their false prophethood and, incited revolt. four for such dissemblers who figured among these were Aswad Ansi, who arose out of Yemen and was known as Ansi, meaning the veiled prophet, this was because he used to put a veil over his face at all times. Although he rallied a large army and stood in open revolt against Islam, he was killed by Qais ibn Makshuh, whereupon his followers scattered. Another was Tulaihah, who belonged to the tribe of Bani Asad, a clan of Quraish, in northern Arabia. Shortly after the death of the Prophet,

he rose in open revolt against the Muslims. Abu Bakr sent Khalid ibn Walid to put down the rebellion and after ferocious fighting, Tulaihah's army was crushed and beat a hasty retreat to Syria. However, later on he embraced Islam.

The third was, Sajah bint Al Harith of Suwaid, she hailed from the tribe of Bani Tamim, a number of whose chiefs, after the death of the Prophet, declared her to prophethood. Four thousand tribes people, including some of their chiefs, rallied around her to march to Madinah. Those who did not wish to cooperate were coerced to follow. On her way to Madinah, she was informed, about the Islamic army led by Khalid ibn Walid, who had recently crushed the rebellion of Tulaihah, on hearing this news, she was frightened and wrote a letter to Musailimah al Kadh-dhab (the Liar) seeking his cooperation. A mutual understanding was reached in the beginning but later Sajah married Musailimah, and accepted his prophethood.

In the meantime, Khalid ibn Walid had reached the headquarters of the Tribe of Bani Tamim. After the marriage of Sajah to Musailimah, most of the people of the Bani Tamim had already reentered Islam. Khalid fought those who were still apostates and defeated them. After crushing the rebellion of Bani Tamim, he turned his attention to the notorious false prophet Musailimah al Kadh-dhab, Musailimah belonged to a tribe from central Arabia. His tribe did not want to follow the "Prophet of Quraish" and they accepted him as their prophet. According to some historians, he declared his "prophethood" during the later period of the Prophet's life. However, he only openly did so after the death of the Prophet. Abu Bakr sent Shurabeel ibn Hasnah and Ikrimah ibn Abi Jahl to crush the rebellion. Later on, Khalid ibn Walid also joined them.

Musailimah was in command of an army of forty thousand Be-

douin. Some of them had joined only to support their tribe, although they did not believe in Musailimah. The Islamic army, of thirteen thousand men, was under the command of Khalid ibn Walid, a fierce battle was fought in which a number of prominent Companions were martyred. When the fighting ended, Musailimah's army was defeated, he himself was killed by Washi, who had been responsible for Hamzah ibn Abd al Muttalib's martyrdom in the battle of Uhud before he had become Muslim.

The Muslim's standing was raised once more over the whole of Arabia upon this defeat, thus, in a short period of time those who raised themselves as false prophets were obliterated by virtue of the faith and wisdom of Abu Bakr. However, other problems still persisted.

For many centuries, the Arabian tribes of the peninsula had known no authority. Islam, gave them discipline and put them under certain moral obligations for the first time. No more could they drink and gamble as they had done in the days before Islam, and their wild spirit rebelled against this moral control in many instances. They sought an opportunity to revolt against strictures, they held unbearable, as they had not learnt the spirit of Islam. The opportunity they sought, presented itself to them upon the death of the Prophet, this, they considered was the right time to discard the yoke of Islam. Virtually the entire Arabian peninsula was under the grip of civil war. These rebellions were permanently quelled by the firm determination of Abu Bakr, who throughout his brief Caliphate had to deal with a series of apostasy wars, the so called Riddah wars. The Arabs all over the peninsula were relapsing into apostasy, but Abu Bakr never lost heart and faced the situation with the utmost courage and faith.

The rebellion began with the refusal of the tribes to deposit Zakat funds in the public treasury, as had become customary in the lifetime of the Prophet. Abu Bakr, summoned a meeting of his advisory council, the Shura to seek their advice in this matter. The majority of the Companions did not consider it advisable to take action in the immediate moment, because of the existing wars against the false prophets and major revolts. But, Abu Bakr was determined to take strong measures and prompt action to make an example to all who were bent on rebellion. He consequently declared, "I swear by God, I will fight alone if no one else supports me, against anyone whosoever who refuses a single kid due on him in Zakat." And so, he launched a major campaign without delay, summoning troops from Madinah, he divided them into eleven battalions, each under the command of an experienced commander. Abu Bakr despatched his troops to different parts of Arabia with instructions that, they must first invite the rebels to Islam, and then, if they did not respond, they were to fight them until they defeated them. Some of the rebel tribes submitted to Islam without fighting, and those who remained adamantly opposed, were fought.

By this strategy, Abu Bakr and his battalions crushed all elements of rebellion, disorder and apostasy. He ably demonstrated his inspiring courage and ability in putting down the renegade movement. Within only a year, the apostasy movement which had affected the whole of the Arabian peninsula, was totally overcome, and once again Islam was re-established. This being achieved, Abu Bakr then turned his attention towards the lands outside Arabia, for this purpose he chose Khalid ibn Walid, who was considered the fittest and most suitable commander for such external expeditions.

The people of Bahrain had adopted Islam during the Prophet's lifetime, however, not long after the Prophet's demise, the Muslim governor of Bahrain died and disorder ensued in the province. Abu Bakr despatched a battalion under the command of Alaa ibn al Hadrammi, who defeated the rebellious tribe of Banu Bakr. The other Bahraini tribe, the Banu Abdul Qais, had remained loyal to Islam and assisted the Muslims against the rebels. There also were other rebellions in the neighbouring states of Oman, Mahra, Hadarmaut and Yemen, these too were put down and crushed by the Muslim battalions.

Al Siddiq and the Founding of the Islamic State

Two great empires surrounded the Arabian Peninsula, at that time. To the North East was the Persian Empire, which had control of Iraq, and to the North lay the Byzantine Empire (the Eastern Roman Empire) so named after the city of Byzantine on the Bosphorus, which Constantine the Great made the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in 330 BC, Later named Constantinople in his honour, it is today know as Istanbul. This Empire, consisted of Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

Having put down the rebellions of the internal tribes and the adjoining states, Abu Bakr focused his attention upon the bordering territories, who were not only continually conspiring against the Islamic State but seeking any way to its detriment. Abu Bakr did not seek merely to overcome these hostile neighbours, his prime aim was to spread the message of Islam, so each expedition he sent out

was instructed to first, invite the enemy to Islam in a peaceful manner, if they accepted God's Message, then they were treated as brothers, otherwise, the Muslims has to accept their challenge, but fighting was only resorted to in self defence. Among the major expeditions was, that of the expedition to Iraq, then a part of the Persian Empire. At that time, confusion reigned in the Persian Empire, it was ruled by a child, Yezdgird under a lady regent, Puran Dukht. The Persians had helped the rebellious tribe of Bahrain and had strove with all their might to try to crush Islam. Some of the Arab tribes, who lived on the borders of Iraq, had accepted Islam, others were Christian. The chief of the Wa'il tribe, Muthannah, had embraced Islam. These bordering tribes, became the main target of Persian oppression and Muthannah and his companions took advantage of the internal conflict in the Persian Empire by, initiating minor fights to prevent the Persians from waging all out war against the Muslims.

Abu Bakr, sanctioned Muthannah's scheme but, later he came to Abu Bakr seeking his permission to launch a major attack against the Empire. The Muslims were threatened by the Persian Empire which saw Islam rising as an increasing power and might, and they were further displeased by the help given by the Persians to the Bahrain rebels. After consulting with his Shura Advisory Council, Abu Bakr permitted Muthannah to begin major hostilities on the condition that, he must first peacefully invite the Persians to Islam. Muthannah, was not greatly experienced in battle so Abu Bakr ordered his renowned general Khalid ibn Walid to proceed immediately to reinforce Muthannah's army. It was the first month of the year 12 H. (633 C.E.) when, Khalid met up with Muthannah's army at Uballah.

The first battle between the Muslims and the Persians took place at Hafir, the Persians were under the command of Hurmuz, a famous Persian general. Accordingly, Khalid invited the Persians to Islam and wrote to them these words:

"We have brought you the Message of God, Islam. Our purpose is not to fight you. Accept Islam, the way of peace, and you will be safe. If you do not, then allow us to instruct your people in Islam's beautiful way of life. If you accept Islam, you will not have to pay Jizya (Tax) to the Caliphate. If you do not agree to any of these conditions then, the only alternative is the sword. Before deciding on the third alternative, you should keep in mind that I am bringing against you a people who love death more than you love your lives."

Khalid sought to explain the Muslim's love of martyrdom in the path of God, however, the Persians were arrogant and paid to heed to his invitation. A battle ensued at Hafir and the Persians were defeated and routed, even though they had tied themselves to each other in chains in order that none of them might run away, consequently, this battle is known as the Battle of Chains. The famous Persian commander Hurmuz was killed in this battle.

Following the Battle of Chains at Hafir and various other minor skirmishes at Madhar, Waljah and Ullis, every time the Muslims fought a new force several times greater than themselves, but they defeated the Persians due to their faith and trust in God, and their number and weaponry was not a factor.

After these minor battles, Khalid laid siege to the famous Persian port city of Hira. At first the Persians held out but they later surrendered to the Muslims, Khalid imposed the Jizya (Tax) on

them and went on to capture other places including Dumat al Janal. Some frontier Arab chiefs also submitted to Khalid. The final battle in this expedition, took place at Firad, where a huge force of Persian Arabs who resided in Iraq and Syria, joined the Persians and crossed the river Euphrates. A fierce battle was fought on the 15th Dhul Qa'dah in the year 12 H. Khalid routed the enemies and conquered the place. With this victory the whole of the South and most of the North of Iraq was conquered, at this Khalid returned to Hira.

Khalid ibn Walid had proved himself a most worthy and successful general for Islam, with only a handful of troops he, had not only overcome all internal rebellions but, secured Islam's security in Arabia. He thereafter, went on to Iraq where he gained victory after victory. It was for his abilities, which the Prophet had foreseen, that Khalid was awarded the title of 'SaifAllah', meaning the Sword of God.

Abu Bakr had been quick to recognise Khalid's capabilities and he placed him in command of the Iraqi campaign. Khalid's performance in this campaign is unparalleled historically. With an army of little over ten thousand men, Khalid overcame a major part of Iraq and brought it under the banner of Islam. He many times defeated enemies twenty times greater than his own force. Khalid knew that success did not lie in sheer numbers but in the hands of God Almighty. He repeatedly declared that they were not fighting for the sake of land or fame, but their purpose was to proclaim God's Message. They did not fear any power knowing that God was with them. Khalid once wrote the following letter to a commander of the Persian army.

"All praise to God Who humbled your pride and disunited you,

and destroyed your might. Accept Islam and you will be in peace, or pay Jizya and let us spread God's Message. If you do not accept any of these conditions then know that I have brought with me such people who love death more than you love life."

Khalid fought fifteen battles in Iraq and was victorious in them all. Not only was he a great general and conqueror, but he was also a fine administrator. He appointed a deputy and a Qadi (judge), at every place he conquered and Muslim teachers were also left behind, to teach Islam to the newly reverted and to preach to the non-Muslims. Through the character of these noble souls and upon seeing the beauty of Islam, often, entire populations entered the folds of Islam upon the conviction of their faith, this is proof enough that, Islam was not spread by force or by the sword, but by winning the hearts of the people, faith being the affirmation of the heart, and the heart can never be won by the sword.

Although a fearless warrior, Khalid was an extremely kind hearted man. He gave strict orders to his army that they should follow all the principles of Islam and, he forbade them from doing any harm to any non combatant. The Muslim army treated civilians kindly and with respect, this surprised the conquered people for they found that, instead of molesting the women they found the soldiers worshipping in prayer to God Almighty all the night. It was said of the Muslim conquerors of the time: "They rode on the back of a horse during the day and on the back of the prayer rug in the night."

The month of Dhul Qa'dah 12 H, marked the end of Khalid's campaign in Iraq, he then returned to the headquarters at Hira and after resting for a while, he took a few men with him and went to

Makkah to perform Hajj, then he returned to Hira. When Abu Bakr heard of Khalid's presence at the Hajj he was amazed that he had left his army alone and, he forbade him from doing so in the future.

During the life of the Prophet, his envoy Dihya al Kalbi was sent on a mission to the Roman Emperor, but he was killed by the Syrians in 6 H.. and his death resulted in the battle of Mu'tah. Hearing news of the Roman's invasion plans, the Prophet himself had marched with some 50,000 men to Tabuk on the borders of Syria, then a province of the Eastern Roman Empire. However, the Romans did not turn up to fight and, the Prophet and his Companions returned without having entered into conflict, then there was another threat of Roman invasion and that time the Prophet appointed Usamah ibn Zaid as the commander of the army which, was later sent by Abu Bakr when he assumed the office of the Caliphate. Usamah returned victorious from this expedition after some forty days.

At this time, Heraclius was Emperor of the Byzantine Empire, with Constantinople (Istanbul) as the Capital. Soon after Usamah's successful expedition, Abu Bakr was informed of the clashes at the Syrian border and of the invasion being planned by the Romans in conspiracy with the Bedouins on the Syrian frontier, once again, Abu Bakr consulted his Shura Council and formulated a plan to secure the frontier. It was not his aim to conquer other lands but it was vital to take strong action against the Romans, in view of the Arab trade with Syria, since the border clashes rendered the trade routes dangerous. Thus, in the year 13 H. Abu Bakr raised a great army and divided it into four battalions. Each battalion was put un-

der the command of an experienced general and directed to march in different directions. Abu Ubaidah ibn al Jarrah, had to march on Homs, Amr ibn al As on Palestine, Yazid ibn Sufyan on Damascus and Shurabeel ibn Hasnah on Jordan, being part of Syria at that time. The army, which numbered 27,00 men in all, was divided into many companies so that the enemy would not hit any one battalion with full force.

Upon its departure Abu Bakr offered some valuable advice to each commander saying:

"Always fear God as He knows what the hearts conceal, treat your subordinates well and honour the representatives of your enemies. Always be truthful and keep away from untruthful men but take as intimates those who are truthful and faithful. Do not be dishonest in any way, do not disturb saints and worshippers of other religions, do not destroy places of worship, do not kill women, old men and children or those who are not fighting. Do not cut down any flowering tree nor ruin any populated places. Do not kill goats, camels and cattle other than what you need to eat. Do not burn gardens, do not be dishonest in taking booty."

Heraclius, despatched four armies to meet the Islamic forces. Each of those armies was several times larger than the total Islamic army. The Muslim commanders informed Abu Bakr of the situation and sought reinforcement. They also informed him of their proposal to merge the four armies under one command. Abu Bakr approved the proposal of merger and, sent the following message to Amr ibn al As:

"Al Salam alaikum! I am in receipt of your letter in which you mention the great Roman armies. Listen! God did not give us victories because of our magnitude or scarcity of numbers when we

fought in the company of the Prophet. Sometimes we fought with him in such a condition that there were not more than two horses in the whole army, and we travelled on the back of one camel, turn by turn. Muslims can never be defeated due to their small numbers. O Amr! The most righteous among us is the one who keeps away from sins. Therefore obey God and ask your companions as well to obey Him, so would you be successful."

He also wrote:

"I have sent orders to Khalid ibn Walid in Iraq to join you immediately. When he joins you give him due regard. Do not impose your superiority over him and do not try to solve your problems without consulting him, and do not oppose him."

Having received these orders from Abu Bakr, Khalid handed over the command in Iraq to Muthannah ibn Harith, and hastened to Syria at the head of ten thousand men. Khalid faced some resistance at many places on the way to Syria and conquered many cities and forts including Irak, Rahit and Busra, a city in Syria. Thus, Khalid conquered the first place in Syria before he joined the allied Islamic forces. Finally, in the month of Rabi al Thani 13 H, he reached Ajnadayn where, he called a council of all the commanders of the Islamic armies who numbered between forty and forty five thousand in all. The first proposal put before them by Khalid was, to appoint a commander in chief. He suggested that one of them should act as the commander in chief in turn each day. The chief command for the first day was given to Khalid, he divided the army into several sections and put each section under the command of a commander.

Meanwhile, the Romans had assembled an army of two hundred and fifty thousand in strength while the Muslims were little more than forty thousand. When the Islamic and Roman armies faced each other, one of the Muslims remarked: "How numerous is the Roman army!" Khalid responded: "Numbers are not important, the final outcome is what matters." As the last battle began, to begin with the Romans put pressure on the Muslims, seeing this Ikrimah ibn Abu Jahl took pledges from many Muslims that they would not give the field to the enemy and, would fight to the death. The Roman army was headed by Theodore, brother of the Emperor Heraclius, but it was ill disciplined and as the battle grew fiercer, the Roman horsemen could not bear the brunt of the Muslim attack and they began to flee. The Roman cavalry was in complete disarray, and then the Muslim forces fell upon their infantry and dispersed its ranks. Thus, were the Romans defeated and although large numbers of them tried to take shelter in the trench, they were pursued and done away with. Three thousand Muslims were martyred in this battle. The defeat of the Romans at the battle of Ajnadayn left Byzantium reeling in shock.

After their victory, the Muslim armies marched on to Damascus where they laid siege to that city. Meanwhile, Abu Bakr fell ill and received the news of the victory at Ajnadayn upon his sick bed. It was the 7th Jamadah al Akhira when, Abu Bakr was taken ill with a severe fever, as his illness took a turn for the worse, he summoned his Shura Council to consult with them about his successor who was to be the second Caliph of Islam. Having witnessed the confusion after the demise of the Prophet, concerning the selection of the first Caliph, he preferred to allow the Muslims decide the matter in his presence. Among the leading figures attending the

Shura were, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abd al Rahman ibn Auf, Muadh ibn Jabal, Ubay ibn Ka'b, Zaid ibn Thabit and other notables of the Muhajirin (Emigrants) and the Ansar (Helpers).

Abu Bakr proposed that Umar be elected as second Caliph. All agreed with this, except for an objection by some of the Companions, on account of his strictness. This was the only objection of Ali and Talha but Abu Bakr rejected their argument, on the grounds that the burden of the Caliphate would temper his strictness. As there was no opposition to Abu Bakr's view, Umar was declared to be the next Caliph and all the Companions including Ali and Talha assented.

In spite of the fact that the appointment of Umar had not been made in the same manner as had the appointment of Abu Bakr, the agreement of the Companions had been sought after fair consultation with the Shura, it was therefore not undemocratic. Abu Bakr had not wanted there to be a repetition of what had happened after the passing of the Prophet. He perceived that, the strength of the Muslim Community lay in its unity which should be preserved at any cost.

After concluding the Shura council, Abu Bakr asked Umar to write down his will for him:

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate - this is the declaration of Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah as he is about to leave this world for the next. At this time, even a non-believer starts to believe and even a great sinner returns to faith, and a disbeliever begins to trust in God. I appoint Umar ibn Khattab as the Caliph. You must follow his orders and obey him. I have done everything good for the sake of God, for His Prophet and for the

welfare of His Religion and the Muslims and for myself in appointing him as Caliph. I hope that he will be honest and just but if he changes his ways and becomes unjust, I will have no responsibility as I do not have the knowledge of the Unseen. Everyone is responsible for his own deeds."

Having thus delivered his will, he was helped up to his balcony where he addressed a large gathering of Muslims:

"O my Brothers! I have not appointed any of my relations or brothers to be Caliph, I have chosen the best person from among you. Do you all agree?"

Everyone of them responded in the affirmative. Then Abu Bakr called Umar and spoke with him for a long time. He, finally gave him the following words of advice in parting:

"O Umar, always fear God. A non-obligatory deed is not accepted unless the obligatory deed is done. The weight of your goodness will be heavy on the Day of Judgment if you follow the Right Path in this world. The deeds of the person who follows the wrong Path in this world, will have no weight on the Day of Judgment, such will have a terrible time. Make the Qur'an and Truth your guide for success. Umar if you follow the path I propose for you, I will surely be by your side."

On Tuesday 22 nd Jamada Al Akhira 13 H. (23 August 634 C.E.), after two weeks of illness, Al Siddiq died at the age of 61. Before passing away, he told his daughter Aishah: "Do not use new cloth for my shroud. Wash the sheet I am using and wrap my body in it." He then asked for all his salary as Caliph, to be given to the Public Treasury after the sale of his garden. He said: "I never

wished to take anything from the Public Treasury, but Umar pressed me to accept an allowance, to permit me to devote my time to the duties of the Caliphate. I was left no choice but to take the offer." After his death, these final wishes of his were acted upon and his daughter Aishah asked Umar to take over the garden as her father had desired. Umar remarked: "May God bless him, he did nothing to cause a word to be spoken against him."

Before becoming Caliph, Abu Bakr had been a rich merchant, after his appointment, Umar and some of the other Companions had pressed him to leave his business and accept some allowance from the Public Treasury. He took the least possible amount, which hardly sufficed him and his family. Once, his wife had wanted to prepare a sweet dish, and somehow managed to save something after one month. When she brought him the money, to make purchases for the sweet dish, Abu Bakr said: "It seems that we have been overpaid beyond our needs." He then deposited the saving in the Public Treasury and his wife was not only unable to prepare the sweet dish but, Abu Bakr ordered his allowance cut down in the future by the amount his wife had saved.

Abu Bakr left behind a noble example of selfless service, he lived and worked for the sake of Islam to his last breath and, never sought a reward.

CHAPTER THREE

Summary of Abu Bakr's Achievements for Islam

Abu Bakr ascended to the office of Caliph at the most crucial and critical moment in Islamic history. He gave Islam new life, after the death of the Prophet, he was entrusted with Islam in its infant stage when it was threatened by rebellions, false prophets and apostasy. He crushed all the futile powers which railed against it, through his unshakable faith. No measure of hardship or difficulty could ever make him deviate from the Sunnah (Way of the Prophet). He achieved unity among the Muslims and put down all rebellion and took Islam across the Arabian borders, a major part of Iraq, came under his rule and the Muslim armies, captured many strategic cities in Syria. Thus, Islam, the Religion of all mankind, began to outspread as the world religion in his time as it was destined to do.

One of the greatest achievements Abu Bakr rendered to Islam was, the compilation of the Qur'an. At that time, there were hundreds of Haffazah (those who had memorised the entire Qur'an) among the Companions during the life time of the Prophet, but the Qur'an had never been compiled in book form, although its memorisation had continued after the death of the Prophet. However, numbers of Haffazah had been martyred in the various battles that had ensued after the Prophet's passing, in the battle of Musailimah alone, some 70 Haffez Companions had died.

Compilation of the Qur'an

Consequently, it occurred to Umar that steps should be taken to preserve the Qur'an intact in its original form, against every kind of risk, and he saw that it was not prudent to depend exclusively upon those who had committed its memory to heart. Therefore, he urged Abu Bakr to have it written down in the form of a book. Although the other Companions agreed with Umar's proposal, Abu Bakr at first hesitated because this had not been done by the Prophet himself. However, after some debate on the subject, he agreed and appointed Zaid ibn Thabit for this work, Zaid hesitated at the thought of undertaking such a momentous task, but he later took heart and began the work. Zaid was the most capable person to be charged with this because he had acted as an amanuensis to the Prophet and was one of the Companions, who had learnt the Qur'an directly from him. Moreover, he had also been present when the Prophet had recited the entire Qur'an to the Angel Gabriel.

Zaid ibn Thabit, placed the chapters in the same order as they had been revealed to the Prophet. He was assisted in the compilation of the Book by a number of prominent Companions and the completed copy of the Qur'an was kept in the house of Umm al Mu'minin, Hafsah, who was one of the Prophet's wives and Umar's daughter. It was announced that, anyone who desired might make a copy of it or compare it with the copy they had in their possession.

The compilation of the Qur'an into book form did not contravene God's law or the Sunnah of the Prophet as, the Qur'an refers to itself as a Book in numerous places, among these being:-

"This is The Book (Qur'an) there is no doubt about it, a guidance to the pious." (Surah 2 verse 2)

Throughout his Caliphate Uthman sent copies of the same compilation of the Qur'an which had been collected during the period of Abu Bakr to various places in the Caliphate. Thus, the work of Abu Bakr continued after his death and although his Caliphate lasted only two years, three months and ten days, his contribution to Islam was next only to that of the Prophet in the services he had rendered. After the Prophet, Abu Bakr was the most distinguished figure of Islam, his nature was mild and gentle but he was stern when it was necessary. He was the true embodiment of Islamic character, diligent, wise, just and a great statesman, he occupies a unique place in Islamic history.

Piety

Abu Bakr, was the most pious of the Companions of the Prophet, once, his servant brought him a meal, he ate a morsel from it, but later learnt that the servant had earned it as a result of soothsaying. He immediately remarked: "O! you would surely have killed me." He then tried to regurgitate it but failed, so he drank water until he was able to disgorge the contents of his stomach. He was known for his even temperament and, never spoke harsh words in any situation, he once said a harsh word to Umar and later, asked him to forgive him for it, Umar delayed in forgiving him and Abu Bakr was so perturbed that he sought the Prophet's intervention with Umar, in excusing himself.

Abu Bakr used to fear God above all, once, he went to a garden where he saw a bird. He sighed deeply and said: "O bird! Lucky you are indeed! You eat and drink as you wish and fly but, do not fear the reckoning on the Day of Judgment. I wish that I were a

bird just like you." And sometimes he said: "I wish I were a blade of grass whose life ended with the grazing of a beast, or a tree that would be cut down and done away with."

In his devotion, it is reported that he used to perform the prayer in the same way as the Prophet. He customarily spent all his belongings for the sake of God and His Prophet. It was for such noble qualities that the Prophet gave him the glad tidings: "Abu Bakr's name shall be called out from all the gates of Paradise and he will be the first person of my people to enter into it."

Government of Al Siddiq

In his way of government, he was exemplary. Abu Bakr gave the very first lesson to mankind on government by the people, such an idea had not been known before. On all occasions, he decided matters only after due consultation with eminent Companions. He used to say: "I am only the Khalifah of the Prophet of God." And many times he advised the people: "I swear by God, I never desired to be Caliph. I never entertained the idea, nor wished for it either openly or secretly. The burden of Khalifah has been put upon me by force and I wish to transfer this trust to a more suitable person." Once, some Muslims complained to him about the strictness of Umar and said: "He is behaving in such a way as if he is the Khalifah rather than you." Abu Bakr told them: "Of course he is the fittest person to be the Khalifah, I am but a humble servant of God Almighty, who has been forced to take charge of this high office."

Establishment of the 'Shura'

Abu Bakr always put matters of state to consultation of the Shu-

ra (Council of Advisors). The members of the Council were the most popular public figures, and membership of the Shura was not gained on account of colour, race, wealth or worldly power, rather upon their services to Islam and devotion to God and His Prophet. Ibn Sa'd recorded that, whenever Abu Bakr faced a problem, he summoned eminent Muhajirin, Ansar and the following members of the Shura, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abd al Rahman ibn Auf, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ubaiy ibn Ka'b and Zaid ibn Thabit for consultation.

Appointment of Officials

Abu Bakr never chose his own sons or family members for public office, but offered the opportunity to those of high merit. Whenever he appointed an officer, he advised him and detailed his duties. On the appointment of Amr ibn As and Walid ibn Uqbah as collectors of the Zakat from the tribe of Quda'ah, he advised them as follows:-

"Fear God openly and secretly, whoever fears God, He provides for him sustenance from such source as he does not know. Whoever fears God, God forgives his sins and gives him reward twofold. To have goodwill toward people is certain piety. You are on such a way that you may without heed go beyond the prescribed limits. Abide by the rules prescribed by the Religion and that will save you from all evil."

And when he appointed Yazid ibn Sufyan as the governor of the conquered part of Syria, he gave him the following advice:

"O Yazid! you have relations in Syria, so do not try to give unlawful benefits to your kin. I fear this in my officers. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) said: "If a Muslim officer ap-

points his kin in positions of power which they do not deserve, he will be cursed by God; and God will not accept any of his excuses or pleas as he enters Hell."

Abu Bakr was a strict administrator and never allowed any of his officers to behave in an aberrant manner. Whenever he found any officer lacking, he immediately warned him. On one occasion, he wrote to Khalid ibn Walid: "You enjoy yourself, and the blood of the Muslims is flowing by your tent." Thus, in his administration of his officers he was scrupulously principled.

His Cabinet

The Officers of his Government in Madinah, the Capital of the Islamic State, were Umar and Ali, who served as Judges and Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah who was the treasury officer. As well as undertaking the duties of a Judge and Jurist, Ali, also acted as the secretary to Abu Bakr. Uthman, was the chief secretary and used to write the various ordinances for the Caliph.

The governor of Makkah was Utbah ibn Usaid, who died on the same day as Abu Bakr. The Governor of Ta'if was Uthman ibn al As, while San'a was governed by Muhajir ibn Umayyah and Hadramaut by Zaid ibn Ubaid. Kholan, a part of Yemen, was under Ya'la ibn Ubaid, Yemen was governed by Abu Musa al Ash'ari, Janad by Mu'adh ibn Jabal, the Province of Bahrain came under Ala ibn al Hadrami, Dumat al Jandal in Iraq was governed by Iyad ibn Ghanam while the rest of Iraq was governed by Muthannah ibn Harith and Najran by Jarir ibn Abdullah.

Towards the end of his reign as Caliph, Abu Bakr had appointed

Abu Ubaidah ibn al Jarrah, Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan, Amr ibn al As and Shurabeel ibn Hasnah as commanders of the Islamic armies in Syria. Khalid ibn Walid was the commander in chief and the greatest general in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr.

Public Treasury (Bait al Mal)

As it had been during the time of the Prophet, there was no separate department for revenue during the period of Abu Bakr's Caliphate. Zakat, Sadaqah (non obligatory charity) and other taxes as well as booty, all used to be brought to Madinah to be placed in the Public Treasury which was under the responsibility of Abu Ubaihah ibn Jarrah until his departure for Syria, as commander of an army. Any funds that were brought into the Public Treasury, were immediately distributed among the poor and needy.

Later in Abu Bakr's reign, he built a house for the Public Treasury, but neither money nor goods of any kind ever accumulated in it. When one of the Muslims expressed his concern for its security, Abu Bakr replied that one lock was more than enough, since nothing was allowed to lie in it. Abu Bakr gave ten Dirhams to each adult in Madinah whether he was free or a slave in his first year as Caliph. In the following year, when the revenue had increased, he distributed twenty Dirhams to each person. Thus, he afforded the slave the same status as the free man recognising that human need was the same in both. After Abu Bakr's death, Umar and Abd al Rahman and Uthman checked the Public Treasury and found only one Dirham in it. Umar exclaimed; "May God bless Abu Bakr!" He then summoned the treasury officer and asked him: "How much money came in as revenue." He replied: "Two hundred thousand

Dinars." The main sources of revenue were Zakat (tax for the poor), Ushr (a special land tax), Jizya (indemnity tax) and war spoils.

Armed Forces

During the time of the Prophet, there had been no regular Islamic army and Abu Bakr had administered it no differently, however, whenever any army departed in his time, he divided it into various battalions and placed each battalion under the command of an officer, who was in turn under the control of the commander in chief. He also appointed, Khalid ibn Walid as commander in chief of the four armies which he despatched to Syria. Abu Bakr always paid particular attention to the moral training and behaviour of the military personnel, at the time he sent the armies to Syria he instructed them accordingly:

"If on your expedition you meet people who devote themselves to the worship of their Creator, do not disturb them in any way and leave them in their sanctuaries. I advise you as follows: Do not kill any woman, child or elderly person. Do not cut any flowering tree, do not destroy any inhabited place, do not kill camels or goats except when you need to eat, do not burn any oasis, do not be dishonest in taking war spoils and do not be a coward in the field."

Abu Bakr always reserved a part of the revenue for the purchase of arms and for the maintenance of the forces. Special pastures were reserved in Baqi and Rabadha for the horses and camels used in battle. He personally used to make inspections of the army camps wherever they were located as there were no permanent barracks during his reign. Once, when the Islamic army was encamped

at Jarf, Abu Bakr went out to make his inspection of the army of Banu Fazarah, seeing him all the men stood up in honour of his arrival, and he said: "God bless you." Some of the men said: "O Khalifah of the Prophet of God! We have brought healthy horses and mares with us and we are all excellent horsemen, allow us a grand standard." Abu Bakr replied: "I cannot give you a large standard because it has already been taken by Banu Abs."

Invitation to Islam

Whenever the Islamic armies went into battle, they were under strict orders from Abu Bakr to invite the enemy to Islam before any hostilities. Usually, an invitation was given for three days before the start of battle. A number of tribes in Iraq accepted Islam without going to fight when Khalid and other commanders preached the message. The Christian Bishop of Hirah accepted Islam merely upon seeing the noble conduct of the Muslim soldiers. Because of these efforts, directed by Abu Bakr, the whole of Arabia eventually re-entered Islam forever.

The Jurists (Muftis)

Abu Bakr established a special department of the Judiciary in which, Muftis (Jurists), were appointed to resolve the problems of the Muslims, according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, this was in addition to the Judiciary supervised by the Qadis (Judges). In Madinah, Umar, Ali, Uthman, Abd al Rahman ibn Auf, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ubaiy ibn Ka'b and Zaid ibn Thabit were appointed as Muftis. No other person was permitted to pass verdicts or to lay down rules of Islamic Law, in the light of the Qur'an and Sunnah to the Muslims.

Judiciary

The Judiciary was entirely separate from the executive. Abu Bakr was himself also a judge and, gave decisions on various matters.

The Caliph, used to hand down punishments as prescribed in the Qur'an or as related by the Prophet. He did not establish any police force or any department as such. However, he did appoint Abdallah ibn Mas'ud as the Sentinel to oversee criminal acts. He also laid down such punishments according to the Qur'an or the Sunnah and ruled the fixed punishment of forty lashes for the drinking of alcohol. He was particularly attentive to the safety of highways and all regions of the state. He ordered severe punishment to robbers and those committing breaches of peace.

The Formation of the Provinces

One of his most notable achievements in the administration of the Islamic State was, the division of the Peninsula into provinces. In his reign the following provinces of Arabia were formed: Madinah, Makkah, Ta'if, San'aa, Yemen, Najran, Hadramaut, Bahrain and Dumat al Jandal. Each province, was under the control of a governor who was the chief executive officer for that region. Abu Bakr did not change the governors or the officers appointed by the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him).

He attended to the administration of the nascent Islamic state with his utmost energies and attention and although, his reign was relatively brief and plagued with rebellion, his administration was

sound and successful. He always followed faithfully in the foot-steps of the Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) to the fullest extent and he retained careful watch over the affairs of his govern-ment. Umar was his right hand, in helping him in the administra-tion of justice. Abu Bakr laid down the foundation of a true Islam-ic State. He was renowned for his piety, faith and trust in God which was ever reflected in his administration.

The Second Caliph

UMAR IBN AL-KHATTAB
(May Allah be pleased with him)

Caliphate period:- 13 H. to 23 H. [634 to 643 C.E.]

The Caliph Umar Ibn al Khattab said:

"Beware of a surfeit of chattels which make life easy for you, just as much as you beware of disobeying God. In my sight, wealth is to be feared more than sin, since it can lead man to destruction by imperceptible degrees by using all the seductions of which it is capable."

CHAPTER ONE
Ancestry

Umar Ibn Al Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was born in 583 C.E, about forty years before the great Hijrah. He was from the Adi family of the tribe of Quraish, his ancestry is linked with the Prophet in the 8th generation. In the clan of Adi, in one of its chief families, the power of truth was to override the power of family ties in the last generation. Nufayl ibn Abd Allah had two sons, Khattab and Amr, by two different wives; and on the death of Nufayl the mother of Khattab married her stepson Amr and bore him a son, whom they named Zaid. Khattab and Zaid were thus half brothers on their mother's side. Zaid was one of the few men who, like Waraqah ibn Nawfal, saw the idolatrous practices of the Quraish for what they were, and not only did he refuse to participate in them himself, but he even refused to eat anything which had been sacrificed to idols. He proclaimed that he worshipped the God of Abraham, and he did not hesitate to rebuke his people in public. Khattab, conversely, was a firm supporter of the deep rooted practices of the Quraish and he was outraged by Zaid's disrespect for the gods and goddesses they worshipped. So he persecuted him to the degree of compelling him to leave the valley of Makkah and take refuge in the hillside above it, he even organised a band of young men for the purpose of preventing Zaid from approaching the Sanctuary. Zaid left the Hijaz and went as far as Mosul in the north of Iraq and from there, travelled southwest to Syria, all the while enquiring with monks and rabbis about the religion of Abraham, until at last he met a monk who told him that the time

was approaching for a prophet to arise in the country he had left who would preach the religion he was seeking. Zaid turned back to retrace his steps, but on his way through the territory of Lakhm on the southern border of Syria he was attacked and killed. When Waraqah heard of his death, he wrote a song like a poem in his praise. The Prophet (ppuh) also praised him and said that on the Day of Resurrection "he would be raised as having, in himself alone, the worth of a whole people".

Many years had passed since Zaid's death, Khattab was also dead and his son Umar was on good terms with Zaid's son Sa'id, who had married Umar's sister Fatimah. The rift between the two branches of the family had been healed. But with the advent of Islam Sa'id was one of the first to embrace it, whereas Umar, whose mother was the sister of Abu Jahl, became one of its staunchest opponents. Fatimah followed her husband, but did not dare to tell her brother, knowing his violent nature. Umar was encompassed by Islam on another side as well, his wife Zainab was the sister of Uthman ibn Maz'un of the clan of Jamah, and Uthman was by nature an ascetic who had a leaning towards monotheism even before the descent of the Revelations. His two brothers and him were among the first to hearken to its call, and they and Zainab had also three nephews who had entered Islam. Of Umar's wife Zainab, nothing is recorded at this time, no doubt because, wherever her sympathies laid, she had powerful reasons for keeping them secret. Her brother Uthman was even more uncompromising than Umar, although somewhat less violent.

Zainab and her brothers were younger cousins of the chief of their clan, Umayyah ibn Khalaf, who was one of the most unswerv-

ing enemies of Islam, as were his immediate family. It was his brother Ubayy who one day took a decayed bone to the Prophet and said: "Do you claim that God can bring this to life?" Then with a scornful smirk upon his face crushed the bone to fragments in his hand and blew them into the face of the Prophet, who said: "Even so, that I do claim and He will raise it and you too when you are as that is now, then He will enter you into the Fire." There followed a Revelation which refers to Ubayy in this matter:-

"And he has set for Us a similitude and forgotten how he was created, he says: "Who will revive the bones when they are rotten?"*

Say: "He shall revive them, the One Who originated them the first time, He is All-Knowing of all creation."

(Surah 36 verses 78 & 79)

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was known by the patronymic name of Abu Hafs and he was given the title of 'Al Faruq' by the Prophet. His earliest life is not known in great detail, however it is related that in his youth he was a famous wrestler and orator, as well as being a spirited person. He was one of the few people in Makkah who could read and write before the advent of Islam and he occupied himself as a businessman.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) married three times before becoming Muslim and had four wives after he embraced Islam. Of his first three spouses there was Zainab, the sister of Uthman ibn Maz'un. She bore Umar three children; Abd Allah, Abd Al Rahman and Hafsah, who became the wife of the Prophet. Zainab became Muslim and died in Makkah. Secondly he married Malkiah

bint Jarwal who was the mother of Ubaidallah, she did not become Muslim and divorced in 6.H. Thirdly, he married Quraibah bint Ummiyah, she too did not become Muslim and Umar also divorced her in 6.H.

Of the wives he married after becoming Muslim, the first was Umm Hakim bint al Harith, who was the mother of his daughter Fatimah. The second was Jamilah bint Asim, who was the mother of his son Asim, she was Muslim but later divorced. Thirdly he married Umm Kulthum bint Ali in the year 17H. she bore him Ruqayyah and Zaid. And lastly he wed Atikah.

The Conversion of Umar ibn al Khattab

When the Prophet began to receive Revelations and to invite people to Islam, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was a mature man of about thirty years of age. Physically he was well built and muscular. Temperamentally he was capable of strong passion, he loved wine and gaiety, and despite his very harshness of character, he was gentle and compassionate towards his people. As for the Muslims, he was initially one of their strongest opponents, a sworn enemy to Islam and the Prophet, and merciless aggressor upon their peace, security and Religion. He had a slave girl who had entered Islam, Umar beat her mercilessly to make her renounce it, but she refused, one day Abu Bakr happened to pass by and asked him if he would sell her to him. Umar agreed, whereupon Abu Bakr bought the girl and saved her from further misfortune at Umar's hands.

Umar was also angry and resentful at the Muslim's emigration to Abyssinia and Negus' protection of them, His pride as a Makkan

was dented by the fact that a foreign king and country were protecting Makkans, who could find no peace or security at home.

In the sixth year of the Prophet's mission, Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) was meeting one day with his Companions in a house in the al Safa quarter of Makkah, among those present were his uncle Hamzah, his cousin, Ali ibn Abu Talib, Abu Bakr ibn Abu Quhafah and other Muslims. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) learned of the meeting and convened with leaders of Quraish in order to solicit a volunteer to assassinate the Prophet, and thus relieve Quraish of its burden, restore its ravaged unity and re-establish respect for its gods which Mohammed had castigated. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) offered himself for this assignment and his suitability for it was unanimously agreed. He soon made his way towards his tryst with sword in hand, however on the way to Makkah he met up with Nu'aym ibn Abd Allah, who enquired him where he was going. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) informed him of his intention to murder the Prophet and upon learning what Umar was about to do, Nu'aym said: "By God, you have deceived yourself, O Umar, do you think that the Banu Manaf would let you run around alive once you had killed their son Mohammed? In that case you had better take care of your own family first, since both your sister and brother in law have become Muslims." At this Umar changed his direction and went straight to the house of his sister Fatimah. She and her husband were both listening to a third person reciting the Qur'an when Umar knocked upon their door, and taking fright at hearing Umar's voice, Fatimah tried to hide away the visitor and the manuscript from which they were reading. When Umar entered he asked: " What was that cantilation I heard as I walked in." The pair denied hearing anything.

Flying into a rage, Umar told them he knew that they had forsaken their faith and entered into the fold of Mohammed. He chastised them and first fell upon his brother in law, delivering him a strong blow and then, when she tried to intervene to stop him, he hit Fatimah in the face so violently that she fell down bleeding profusely. At this the pair lost their fear entirely and said together: "Yes! we have become Muslims. Do whatever you wish, we are determined to die as Muslims." At this surge of courage and upon seeing Fatimah's bloodstained face Umar felt ashamed, he loved his sister deeply but could not tolerate her conversion to Islam, however, moved at the sight of her, after calming himself down, he asked her to show him the pages of the Qur'an which she and her husband had been reading. Fatimah replied that he may not touch the Qur'an until he had washed his body and made himself pure, so Umar washed and then read the leaves which they had been studying. It was the beginning of Surah 'Ta Ha', and when he reached the verse:

"Indeed I am God, there is no god but I, therefore worship Me, and establish prayer for My Remembrance."

(Surah 20 verse 14)

As he read it Umar's face changed to an expression of regret for what he had just done. He was deeply shaken by its beauty, majesty and the nobility of its call and he exclaimed: "This is indeed the word of God! Take me to see Mohammed."

At this, Khabbab, who had until that moment been hiding in the house, came out from inside and said: "O Umar, glad tidings, the prayer of the Prophet has been granted. Last night he prayed to God to strengthen Islam with either you or Umar ibn Hisham." At this, Umar left his sister's house, his heart mellowed and his soul

reassured by the new certainty which he had just discovered. He went straight to al Safa, where the Prophet was meeting with his Companions and sought permission to enter. The Prophet (ppuh) asked him: "O Umar, what brings you here?" Umar replied: "I am here to accept Islam." cries of 'God is Great' filled the air of Makkah as the Muslims rejoiced at his conversion.

One of the Companions, Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud later related that Umar's conversion to Islam had been a great blow for the unbelievers, it had reduced their power further and caused them to reconsider their strategy. In fact, it increased Muslim power so greatly and so significantly that both they, and the Quraish, had to change their positions vis-a-vis each other. Moreover, it triggered a whole line of events inspiring new levels of sacrifices and, stirred new forces which, together, led to the emigration of Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) and to the inception of the political side of his career.

Umar Al Faruq is given the title Amir al Mu'aminin (The Amir of the Believers)

The Muslims used to call Abu Bakr, Khalifat Rasool Allah, which means the Caliph of the Messenger of God. Then they asked Umar that if they were to call him the Caliph of the Caliph of the Messenger of God, that would be too lengthy a name. Thus he was called Amir al Mu'aminin.

Beforehand, the Muslims had lived in perpetual fear of the unbelievers, and many of them concealed their faith. With Umar's open conversion to Islam the Muslims felt free to pray in public, since Umar had declared his faith to the chiefs of the Quraish. They had been dumbfounded but were powerless to seek any way against him. Having sought the permission of the Prophet, Umar lead a party of Muslims to the Ka'bah to offer prayers there. Hamzah ibn Abd al Muttalib, who had also become Muslim a few days earlier, led another group of Muslims and when all had assembled at the Ka'bah, they offered their prayers in congregation, with the Prophet leading the prayer. This was the first public congregational prayer in the history of Islam. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) awarded Umar with the title of 'Al Faruq' because of his courage in bringing this about.

Emigration from Makkah to Madinah

Umar showed his courage too when the Muslims were ordered

to migrate to Madinah, although most of them left secretly, Umar declared his intention to leave openly and challenged anyone to stop him if they could. He put on his arms and went to the Ka'bah where he announced: "I am migrating to Madinah, if any man wants to hold me back, let him come forward if his mother wants to cry for his life." But no one in Makkah took up Umar's challenge, and he left for Madinah freely and openly.

At this time a new stage began in the Prophet's mission. The political stage in which Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him) showed such insight, wisdom and statemanship which arrested such attention and then such awe and respect. The Prophet (ppuh) sought to bring a political and organisational unity to his new home town of Madinah. For this purpose he consulted with Umar, who together with Abu Bakr, he named 'his two viziers'.

The Muslims were all well settled in Madinah only months after the Hijrah, but their longing for Makkah increased every day as they thought of their loved ones whom they had left behind, their property and wealth which they had forsaken and the injuries which the Quraish had inflicted upon them. The Quraish on the other hand, had, begun to mobilise for war.

Umar fought in almost all the major battles, Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, Khaibar, Hunain and in the expedition of Tabuk where he gave half of his wealth for the cause of God. After Abu Bakr, he was the most active in giving away his belongings in the way of God. The Prophet (prayers and peace be upon him) had a deep love for Umar, he once remarked: "If a Prophet were to come after me, it would have been Umar." In another Hadith Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet said: "In Bani Israel there were people who were

not prophets but talked to God. If anyone in my Ummah (nation) were to be likened to those people, it would be Umar."

After the battle of Badr, when the Prophet sought the advice of his Companions on the fate of the war captives, Umar pleaded with the Prophet: "O Prophet of God, these are the enemies of God. They betrayed you and banished you, so strike off their necks. They are the leaders of idolatry and misguidance. If you do as I suggest, God will consolidate Islam and debase the idolaters." Before declaring his decision the Prophet said of Umar: "Umar is like Gabriel among the angels, he is the carrier of God's wrath and condemnation of His enemies. Among the Prophets he is like Noah when the latter said, O God spare not one of the unbelievers, or like Moses when he said," "O God destroy their wealth and confirm them in their error, that they may not believe until they receive the painful chastisement."

During the battle of Uhud, when some of the Muslim archers had abandoned their posts in quest of booty, and so jeopardised the Prophet's security, Umar together with Abu Bakr and other prominet Companions formed a protective circle around the Prophet and moved him to safer ground toward the mountain. The Prophet (ppuh) had been injured and when they reached the entrance of the valley, they began to tend his wounds. While this was taking place, a small force of Makkan cavalry began to pursue the Muslims on the hillside, Umar led a number of the Prophet's Companions and fought them off, repelling them completely.

After the battle was over, the Quraish, who had at first thought that the Prophet had been killed, suspected that he may be with his army somewhere upon higher ground, above the plain. However,

there was no chance now for them to launch an attack upon the mountain, so they buried their dead and stated their revenge upon the dead Muslims stripping them of whatever they could, and loaded their camels ready to set off. Before doing so, Abu Sufyan mounted his chestnut mare and approached near the point where the Prophet and his Companions had been stationed at the foot of the mountain shouting: "War goes in turns and this is a day for a day. Exalt yourself O Hubal! Make your religion prevail!" At this, the Prophet told Umar to reply to him saying: "God is All High, Supreme in Majesty, we are not equal, our slain are in Paradise while yours are in the Fire." Umar went towards the edge of the precipice and answered him as the Prophet had instructed, at which Abu Sufyan, recognising Umar's voice, called up to him: "I implore you, Umar, by God have we slain Mohammed?" Umar replied: "No, by God, he is listening at this moment to every word you say." Abu Sufyan turned to leave saying: "I take your word for it Umar, as your word is truer than the word of Ibn Qam'iah."

For the first twenty years of the Prophet's commission to prophethood there had been no ordinance revealed regarding the use of alcohol. Umar enquired about the drinking of wine and prayed to God to show the Muslims his will in this regard, and it was in this connection that the verse was revealed saying:

"They ask you about intoxicants and gambling, say: "In both of them there is grievous sin, and some profit for people; but the sin is more grievous than the profit". They ask you how much they are to spend, say: "Whatever you can spare". So God expounds His Commands to you, in order that you may reflect."

(Surah 2 verse 219)

Despite the indication this verse gave, the Muslims who had been in the habit of drinking, did not cease from doing so. Some of them in a state of intoxication would pray without knowing what they were reciting, again Umar prayed to God to show more of His will in this matter. In answer to his prayer, later, another step towards prohibition was taken with the following Revelation:

" O you who believe! Do not approach prayers while you are intoxicated, until you can understand all that you say, nor in a state of impurity, except when passing through, until you have washed yourselves, but if you are sick, or on a journey, or one of you comes from the call of nature, or if you have approached women, and you cannot find water, then clean yourselves with pure dust by wiping it over your face and hands, surely God is All-Pardoning, All-Forgiving. " (Surah 4 verse 43)

From that day on, when the call to prayer was made, the town decrier would proclaim: "Let no drunken man come to prayer." Despite this new limitation upon alcohol, Umar continued to pray to God to send down yet a clearer Revelation concerning it. Personally, Umar was quite opposed to alcohol because the Arabs often drank themselves into a stupor, pulling each other's beards and hitting one another. It so happened that at a banquet which included both the Ansar and Muhajirin a member of the latter group boasted of his people's superiority over the former group. A member of the Ansar equally intoxicated, wounded the latter on the nose by hitting him with a scull bone. Under the influence of liquor the two groups quarreled, fought and generated all kinds of hatred towards one another until they almost destroyed their previous harmony and mutual esteem. On this occasion a special Revelation was sent down:

*" O you who believe! Most certainly intoxicants and gambling and idol worship and fortune telling are an abomination of Satan's handiwork, so shun it, that you may prosper. * Satan desires only to cause enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling, and to hinder you from the remembrance of God and from prayer, will you then desist?* (Surah 5 verses 90-91)

Thus was the total prohibition of alcohol instituted. The common Arabic saying: "Alcohol causes the loss of both mind and money," is attributed by tradition to Umar who strove so assiduously in his prayer to eradicate this evil.

When he had news of the Prophet's death, Umar was so greatly shocked he could not believe it until Abu Bakr reminded him of a verse of the Qur'an on the matter. He then went with Abu Bakr to the assembly where the people had gathered to elect the first Caliph. All the men present began to talk at the same time and the meeting was on the verge of disintegration. With his usual clear and loud voice Umar said: "O Abu Bakr, stretch forth your hand and I will give you my oath of fealty. Did the Prophet himself not command you to lead the Muslims in prayer? You, therefore, are his successor. We elect you to this position. In electing you we are electing the best of all those whom the Prophet loved and trusted." Umar's words touched the hearts of those present, as they truly expressed the Prophet's will up to, and including the last day of his life. Thus was Umar the first person to pledge his allegiance to Abu Bakr and became his right hand throughout his reign.

CHAPTER TWO

Caliphate

(Khilafah)

Umar took over the Caliphate, after the death of Abu Bakr, on 22nd Jamada al Thani 13 H. (23rd August 634 C.E.). Umar remained faithful to the ways of the Prophet and the policies of his predecessor. With his characteristic zeal and vigour and strict adherence to the Sunnah of the Prophet, he subjugated the mighty Empires of Persia and Byzantine. His Caliphate brought in the 'Golden Age' of Islam, which comprised the fall of Persia, the conquests of Syria, the fall of Jerusalem and the conquest of Egypt.

Fall of the Persian Empire

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, Khalid ibn Walid had conquered the Kingdom of Hira, which was part of the Persian Empire. He was then ordered to join the expedition to Syria. before departing he appointed Muthannah ibn Harith as the commander of the Islamic army. The Persians were incensed at their loss of the Kingdom of Hira and the Emperor despatched a great army under the command of his premier general, Rustam, the famous commander in chief of the Persian armies. As pressure increased from Persia, Muthannah sought Umar's permission for reinforcements. The new Caliph, Umar, was in Madinah at that time to receive pledges of loyalty from a large gathering of Muslims, where he put the matter of reinforcements to the people, but at first received no response.

However after a number of sermons on the nobility of Jihad, many Muslims volunteered to assist Muthannah against Persia. Abu Ubaid ath Thaqafi was appointed as commander of the Islamic army, which now comprised some five thousand battle ready men. Meanwhile, Rustam sent his subordinate to attack the Muslims, and the Persians had retaken some places previously conquered by the Muslims.

When Abu Ubaid reached the Persian army, a battle ensued at Namariq in which the Muslims were victorious. Many of the famous Persian generals were killed, including Jaban, Rustam's right hand man. Some minor battles were fought afterwards in which the Muslims also achieved the upper hand.

The Persians were startled by their defeat and Rustam gathered a great army to confront the Muslims. The two armies met on the far bank of the Euphrates, the Persians under the command of Bahman, a famed Persian warrior. In his enthusiasm to confront the enemy, Abu Ubaid chose to cross the river, although Muthannah and other Muslim generals preferred to allow the Persians cross to them. Consequently, the Muslims lost the battle, Abu Ubaid was martyred and many Muslims fell in the fighting. Muthannah took over the command and ordered the reconstruction of the bridge, which had been destroyed by the elephants of the Persian army. However, in spite of this, Muthannah was left with only 3000 men from an original army of 9000.

This defeat came as shock to Umar, he despatched special messengers to the various tribes and urged the Muslims to prepare for a new Jihad against the Persians. New reinforcements were sent out to Muthannah's army and included in these forces, were numbers of Christian Arabs.

The Persians also assembled a huge army, this time the commander in chief, Rustam, appointed Mehran Hamdani as commander, since he had journeyed in Arabia, he was familiar with the territory and understood the Arabian way of fighting. The Muslim army, under the command of Muthannah, encountered the Persians at a place called Buwaib (present day Kufa). The Muslims challenged the Persians to cross the river, and they responded. The Muslims numbered little more than 20,000 while the Persians army was estimated to be two hundred thousand, several times larger. A ferocious battle ensued, the Muslims fought desperately and after a fierce fight, the Persians were defeated. They tried to flee back across the river but the Muslims had destroyed the bridge. In the chaos that followed in the Persian ranks, their commander, Mehran was killed together with some one hundred thousand of his men. This victory brought under Muslim control the entire western part of the Persian Empire (present day Iraq).

The defeat at Buwaib had disquieted the entire Persian Empire from the ruler, to the meanest of people. For the first time they perceived with surprise the strength of the Muslims, who had overcome their great army with only a few hundred men. Following this defeat the Persians replaced the Empress Puran Dukht with a young Emperor, the twenty one year old Yezdgird. The new Emperor reorganized the army and reinforced the frontier defences. A number of rebellions arose on the borders which resulted in the recapture of some places controlled by the Muslims.

Hearing the news, Umar instructed Muthannah to call the border tribes and to return inside safer borders until reinforcements reached him. He declared a Jihad all over the land and sent emis-

saries to gather together an army. Twenty thousand Muslims were assembled. Umar resolved to lead the army himself this time, but the Shura Council advised against it. They proposed instead that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, a renowned warrior and one of the Prophet's uncles, should lead the army. Umar agreed. This army consisted of seventy Companions who had taken part in the very first battle of Islam, at Badr. As the army left Madinah, Umar gave the following instructions to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas:-

"God does not repel evil with evil, but He repels evil with good. All men, high and low are equal with Him. God's favour can only be won through devotion to His service. Remember that the Sunnah of the Prophet is the only proper way of doing anything. You are going on a momentous mission which you can only discharge by following the Truth. Inculcate good habits in yourselves and in your Companions."

The advice he gave demonstrates that the Muslim's purpose was to proclaim God's Message of Islam, rather than to fight.

Envoys to the Emperor of Persia

Meanwhile, Muthannah had died and his brother Bashir joined Sa'd with an army of eight thousand men. Sa'd was at all times in direct contact with Umar who was constantly directing the movements of the army. Finally, Umar sent orders for the army to make camp at Qadisiya and for an envoy to be despatched with the Message of Islam to Yezdgird, the Emperor of Persia.

Upon these instructions Sa'd made camp at Qadisiya and together with the Muslim army waited there for about two months. While

they waited, Sa'd despatched envoys to the Emperor Yezdgird, who arrived at the Persian court, where they were received by the Emperor. The court was the epitome of Persian splendour. The Muslim envoy, Nu'man ibn Maqram extended an invitation for the Persians and the Emperor to accept Islam, saying:

"O Persians, we invite you towards the Path of Peace (Islam). if you accept it, you will become our brother and we will leave you God's Book, the Qur'an, for your guidance to follow His commands. If you reject this sacred message, you must pay Jizya (indemnity tax). The third alternative, if you reject the first two proposals, will be the sword, if you obstruct us in spreading this message."

Yezdgird was an arrogant man, and became incensed with rage at the speech of the Muslim envoys, he ranted: "You come out of the desert smelling of goats and sheep, and dare to tell the Emperor of Persia who he should worship!" He got a basket full of earth and threw it over the head of Asim, the leader. Asim carried the earth back to Sa'd who took it as a sign of impending victory. And thus the stage was set for conflict.

The Emperor despatched an army of one hundred thousand men, led by Rustam, the commander in chief together with other famed commanders, among them, Jalinus, Mahran ibn Bahram Razi and Harmuzan. Rustam feared the Muslims and was not anxious to face them in battle, he took six months to reach Qadisiya from Mada'in the capital. He intended to negotiate with them in the first instance and upon arrival, asked them to send a delegation to meet with him. The Muslim emissaries went to Rustam's camp headed by Rabi' ibn Amir. After much discussion nothing was re-

solved and Rabi' delivered the message of Islam clearly stating the same three conditions which had been offered to the Emperor before. On the following day Rustam again asked Sa'd to send a delegation, and on this occasion Hodzeifa ibn al-Yaman was sent to meet him, he reiterated the same conditions and added that if he did not accept them in three days the third alternative would be applied. On the third day, Rustam again asked the Muslims to send an emissary and this time Mughirah ibn Shu'bah went. Rustam tried to negotiate by offering the Muslims money, saying: "I see you are poor and hungry, we would give you so much wealth it would suffice you for the rest of your lives." Hearing this, Mughirah angrily replied: "We were hungry and poor but God sent His Messenger to us and so, our fate was changed and we were nourished. He asked us to obey God alone and to spread His Message. If you follow His Message (Islam) you will be our brothers, we will never fight you. If you do not, then allow us to spread His word and pay us the Jizya, if not, the final decision will be made with the sword."

At this, Rustam arose in anger and vowed to kill all the Muslims at sunrise the following day. Mughirah returned to the Muslim camp repeating: "There is no power or might other than God Almighty."

The Battle of Qadisiyah

No sooner than Mughirah had left the Persian camp, Rustam rallied his army to prepare for an attack at dawn. He ordered the construction of a bridge over the canal which separated the two armies and the next morning led his soldiers across to attack the Muslims. When both the armies were primed for battle, Sa'd ibn

Abi Waqqas sent Rustam a letter warning him: "O Rustam! There are people with me to whom death in the Way of God is more desirous to them than wine is to the people of your army."

To cries of 'God is Great', the battle finally began at Qadisiya in the month of Muharram, in the year 14 H. (June 637). Sa'd was ill and directed the operation from his sick bed. The fighting raged on fiercely for three days, the Muslims numbered 28,000 while the Persian army was estimated at 120,000. At first, Rustam displayed great skill in deploying his troops and the Muslims showed great valour and skill, but the Persian elephants frightened off the horses of the Muslim cavalry, since they were not trained in fighting with elephants. However, the Muslim archers successfully rained arrows and spears bringing down many of the elephants' mounts. The battle ended inconclusively on the first day. The following day the battle again reached no conclusion. On the third day, the Muslims wrapped cloth around the bodies of their camels to frighten the Persian elephants, this tactic worked successfully, and the Muslim archers struck many of the elephants in their eyes and cut their trunks. The blinded elephants ran wildly towards the Persian army and destroyed their ranks, the battle continued through to the fourth day when the elephants created havoc in the Persian lines. Finally, some of the Muslim fighters from the chief clans rushed upon Rustam and destroyed the special battalion he had set up around himself. As his canopy was blown away he tried to flee, but there was no escape for him, and he was slain. Seeing their commander in chief killed before them, the Persians started to abandon the field for their lives. Thirty Thousand Persians were slain while there were about six thousand Muslim casualties.

The battle of Qadisiyah proved to be a decisive one in the history of Islam, it shattered the strength of the Persian Empire. Umar received the news with great joy and the Muslims gained vast war spoils which were distributed among the troops with a portion being sent to the Public treasury according to Islamic law. Following this victory the Muslims pursued the Persians, they captured Babal and Kutha and then, laid siege to Bahrah Sher which was a strategic fort on the outskirts of the Persian capital, Mada'in (Ctesiphon). The siege continued for two months and finally the Muslims took the fort, their next objective being the capital itself, Mada'in.

The Fall of Mada'in,

The Persian Capital

The city of Mada'in was situated on the east bank of the river Tigris and was almost encircled by it. After a few months rest. Sa'd took permission from Umar to invade the city. As Sa'd began to march upon the capital, the Persians destroyed the bridge over the river in their attempt to forestall their advance. However, although the river was deep and swiftly flowing the determination of the Muslims was not diminished. Having complete faith in God, Sa'd is recorded as having said: "God made a way for Moses and his people through the Red Sea, He will surely help those who are following His final Prophet and Messenger Mohammed."

Sa'd consulted his generals and ordered the Muslims to advance into the river. Sixty horsemen were the first to plunge into the turbulent waters and cross to the other side. Then the entire army followed them crossing as if they walked on dry ground. At this the

Persian archers rained their arrows upon the Muslims. Sa'd had already appointed six hundred Muslim archers on a nearby hillock, and they returned the barrage with such intensity that the Persians ran away crying: "Dev amdand, Dev amdand!" which means", the giants have come". The Muslims completed their crossing without serious loss. Yezdgird and his ministers had already taken flight and the capital was captured without any opposition. With this victory, the entire territory which lay between the Tigris and the Euphrates fell to the Muslims, fulfilling the prophecy of the Prophet who said: "A number of Muslims will capture the White Palace of the Persian Emperor."

Umar and Sa'd gave praise and thanks to God for bringing them this great victory. As the rich war booty from the White Palace reached Madinah, Umar's eyes were filled with tears and he remarked: "I weep because riches are often the cause of enmity and discord. People who have such evils, ultimately lose respect."

Taking shelter in Hulwan, the Persian Emperor began to prepare for a grand assault on the Muslims. Kharzad, Rustam's brother, was now commander in chief, he assembled a huge army determined to avenge the past defeats. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, after consulting with Umar, sent an army under the command of Hashim and Qa'qas to face the Persians at Jalula. Once again a ferocious battle ensued and once again, the Persians were defeated.

The Muslims pushed on and captured Qaka and Hulwan, where the Emperor Yezdgird was taking refuge. He fled to Khurasan and remained in Mery. The final significant battle was fought at Nihawand in the month of Muharram in the year 19 H. (642 C.E.) The Persians were utterly defeated. Following a number of minor

skirmishes, by the year 21 H. the Muslims had conquered Hamdam, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Muslim Control over the Persian Empire

Yezdgird, the Persian Emperor, then fled to Isphahan, then to Kirman and from there to Balkh. Everywhere he fled he was pursued by the Muslims. Finally by the year 23 H. the whole of Persia came under Muslim rule. The Muslims then marched east of Sind (present day Pakistan) and they captured Makran and Baluch. Umar, however ordered Hakam to go no further with his army as he did not want to extend his borders at the cost of Muslim blood. So Makran became the furthest eastern place under Muslim rule during the reign of Umar. Umar had remarked, after the fall of Persia: "God has destroyed the Persian Empire, they cannot now harm the Muslims. O Muslims! If you do not follow the Straight Path, God will take this power from you and give it to whoever He likes."

At no place was Islam thrust upon the non Muslim people of the conquered, lands, forcibly at the point of a sword. Islam spread by virtue of its, nobility, and the example of its followers. Many Western historians acknowledge this fact. In 'A Literary History of the Arabs, R.A. Nicholson writes: "It must not be supposed that the followers of Zoroaster and Christ in these countries were forcibly reverted to Islam. Thousands embraced it voluntarily."

As Umar had feared, the conquest of the Persian Empire had brought the Muslims into contact with the luxuries of life, and with the passing of time, some fell prey to the vices which were prevalent in those days.

The Founding of Basrah and Kufa

The two military barracks established by the Muslim's armies in Basrah and Kufa in 638 C.E, later became large cities. Basrah was situated on the Shatt al Arab waterway and was significant because, it strategically guarded the passage from the Persian Gulf to Mesopotamia. Kufa was situated on the bank of the Euphrates. These cities were to become important centres of Islamic culture and civilisation.

The Defeat of Syria

During the reign of Abu Bakr, the Romans had been defeated by the Muslims on the Syrian frontier, and they had taken a number of Byzantine cities such as Busra and Ajnadayn. They had also laid siege to Damascus, and after his death, had captured the city together with Homs and Qansrin. In these three battles. Khalid ibn Walid had played an important role. In recognition of Khalid's achievements Umar had said: "May God bless the soul of Abu Bakr for putting Khalid in the right place."

As these strategic cities fell, the Roman Emperor Heraclius, became furious and he despatched a huge army to confront the Muslims. To be able to meet these forces, the Muslims had to leave some of the places they occupied and withdraw to the border. Upon their departure from these places they returned the Jizya they had received from the non-Muslims under their occupation, telling them: "We cannot protect you so we are returning it." This is a sublime example of the integrity with which the Muslims treated the people under their rule. Many were so impressed that they mourned the Muslim's departure from their land.

The Battle of Yarmuk

Following the fall of Damascus, Homs and other places, the Romans fled to Antioch where the Emperor Heraclius was sojourned while contemplating the removal to his capital city Constantinople.

The Romans pleaded with Heraclius to assist them against the Muslim armies, whereupon Heraclius held court in Antioch and began to muster a great force to eject the Muslims from Syria. Meanwhile, the Muslims that had gathered at Yarmuk prepared to face the Roman army. The Roman force was several times greater in number than the Muslim one. To begin with, it was under the command of Khalid ibn Walid but as the battle progressed, he received a letter from Umar relieving him of the post and appointing Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah as the commander in chief. On the 15th Rajab H. (20th August 636) a fierce battle was fought which resulted in the Roman defeat. Their cavalry fled and their infantry was annihilated. The Roman commander, Theodorus, himself fell and at this, the entire army took flight in a panic stricken hoard. According to Tabari, about one hundred thousand Romans were killed at that battle while Muslim casualties stood at three thousand.

The battle of Yarmuk was a conclusive turning point for the Byzantine Empire, the power of the Romans was crushed and Syria's fate was decided once and for all as it fell under Muslim rule. Heraclius, hearing of the defeat at Yarmuk, fled from Antioch to Constantinople saying: "Farewell O Syria! What a fine land this is for the enemy!"

Khalid Relieved of the Command

Khalid ibn Walid occupied a unique position in the history of heroism, he was a successful and powerful general and devoted his entire life and effort to the cause of Islam. Umar always had great appreciation for the services he rendered to the cause. In spite of this, certain complaints were made against him, one of which was, on account of his extravagance, on one occasion he awarded 10,000 dinars to a poet, unable to explain his action satisfactorily to Umar, he was relieved of the post of commander during the battle of Yarmuk. His removal was not because of tyranny or fraud, but because Umar deemed it necessary to admonish the people, who were becoming inclined to put their trust in an arm of flesh rather than to The One Giver of all victory. However, Khalid proved himself to be a true Muslim and fought valiantly alongside the ordinary soldiers, his demonition having no detrimental effect upon him. After the battle, when his dismissal became known, he was asked why the news had not dampened his spirit. He replied: "I was fighting in God's cause."

The Fall of Jerusalem

Amr ibn al As had led the army to Jerusalem, after the capture of Antioch and other strategic cities of the Byzantine Empire, Abu Ubaidah joined him with Khalid ibn Walid. Together they laid siege to the great city of Jerusalem, which was defended by a massive wall. The people of the city, having witnessed the defeat of the Byzantine forces, offered the Muslims a peace treaty on condition that the Caliph came in person to sign the treaty before them.

This request was conveyed to Umar in Madinah and after the usual consultation with his Shura Council, he took up the offer.

Umar's Visit to Jerusalem

Before departing, Umar appointed Ali to stand as his deputy, and set off for Jerusalem with his servant Salim, they took turns to ride their one camel. As Umar entered Jerusalem it happened to be Salim's turn at sitting on the camel, and although he offered the Caliph to take his place, Umar refused saying: "The honour of Islam is sufficient for us all." At which he entered the city holding the rope leading the camel on top of which sat his servant. His clothes were worn off and somewhat worse the wear of his servant from travel.

Abu Ubaidah, Khalid ibn Walid and the other commanders rode out to greet him, they were attired in lavish robes and upon seeing this, Umar was angered, he threw some pebbles at his generals and retorted: "Have you changed to that degree in only two years? The only way to success, is to follow the way of the Prophet."

The treaty was duly signed by Umar and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were granted complete security of their lives and property. Their places of worship were secure and left undisturbed. All the people were permitted to follow their belief without hindrance.

It was the year 16 H. (635 C.E.) when the gates of the city were opened and the Muslims entered. Umar toured the city and when the time for prayer came, the Christians offered Umar that he and the Muslims perform their prayer in the church, but Umar declined fearing that it might be taken as an excuse for future generations to

misappropriate the church from the Christians. So he performed the prayer on the steps of the church, but not before giving a written pledge to the Bishop that the steps would never be used for congregational prayers or even for calling the Muslims to prayer in the future.

The Mosque of Umar at Jerusalem

Umar then laid the foundation of a mosque at the place known as 'Sakhra', this location was suggested by the Bishop. It was in this place that the Prophet Jacob (Israel) had received God's revelation and also where the great temple of Solomon was built. Umar himself laboured in the construction of the mosque, which is known as Umar's mosque.

The Muslims had never aimed for territorial expansion, they fought solely to protect the birth place of Islam or in self defence, seeking only to disseminate God's message and to preach Islam without hindrance. If they were given free passage in their cause, as had been the case in Jerusalem, no fighting took place. Throughout Islamic history never, was a nation compelled to forsake its belief and to accept Islam.

The Defeat of Jazirah

Following the conquest of Jerusalem, the Romans sought to reclaim Syria. The people of Jazirah (present day north western Iraq) plotted to oust the Muslims from Syria as well. The Byzantine Emperor, Heraclius sent his army to aid the people of Jazirah. Together they invaded Homs, the fort which had been conquered by the Muslims under the command of Abu Ubaidah. The Muslims fell

upon their enemies and fought them off. In these circumstances it was necessary for Umar to order the Muslim forces to occupy Jazirah. After its conquest under the command of Ayad ibn Ghanam, Jazirah was placed under the Governor of Homs (Syria).

The Famine and Plague

Hijaz in Northern Arabia and Syria were both faced with severe famine and drought in the years 17-18 H. Umar took steps to send supplies of food from Egypt, which had partly been conquered by Amr ibn al As. He despatched three large vessels loaded with grain to Madinah. Upon arrival the cargo was unloaded in Umar's presence and he personally distributed the grain among the needy. During the famine he refused all delicacies, saying, when urged to take care of his health: "If I do not taste suffering, how will I feel the suffering of others." The famine grew intolerable and Umar prayed, to God at a large gathering of Muslims. Before the prayers had been concluded relief came and the rains began.

At the same time, a plague ravaged the greater part of Iraq, Syria and Egypt it wrought devastation not only to the peoples of those countries, but also to the Muslim armies. When its grip subsided, Umar went to Syria to ascertain the loss it had caused, among those who had perished in the plague were three notable figures, Abu Ubaidah, Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Yazid ibn Abu Sufyan. Umar appointed Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan as Governor of Damascus to replace his brother Yazid, who had passed away.

The Defeat of Egypt

Egypt was a powerful province of the Byzantine Empire, having

a strong navy base at Alexandria and thus, it was a threat to the security of Hijaz in Northern Arabia. The Romans were occupied in conspiring to regain the territories conquered by the Muslims and devised to attack them through Egypt. Clearly it was a necessity in terms of defence to drive the Romans from Egypt. Consequently, towards the end of 17 H. (638 C.E.) Amr ibn al As, who had been instrumental in the conquest of Palestine, urged the Caliph to permit him to mount a campaign against the Nile valley. He received the Caliph's permission and set off from Palestine for Egypt leading four thousand men.

Entering Egypt by way of the route of Wadi al Arish, he overtook some minor towns and then laid siege to the strongest Roman fort in Egypt, Fustat (present day Cairo), which he eventually conquered.

The defeat of Fustat came as a serious blow to Roman domination in Egypt. The Emperor, Constantine II, upon hearing tidings of the fall of the fort, became enraged and despatched a massive army to Alexandria. Amr ibn al As also set off from Fustat for Alexandria to confront this force. He obtained reinforcements from the Caliph in preparation, as Alexandria was a strategic Roman stronghold in Egypt. Being located on the Mediterranean sea, the Romans could easily send in reinforcements of their own by sea as well as supplies. It was therefore, a tactically complicated task to conquer it. Amr ibn al As laid siege to the city for six months to no avail. At this, Umar wrote to Amr the following letter:

"I am afraid that the Muslims have not been acting properly upon the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. The only way to achieve victory is by following the ways of the

Prophet. They should therefore adhere more to them and then try again to deliver a final blow to the enemy."

Amr read the letter out loud to the Muslims. Umar's orders were at once complied with and finally in 20 H. (640 C.E.), after heavy fighting, Alexandria was overcome by the Muslims. Following the conquest of this great city, the former glory of Rome, Amr wrote to the Caliph:

"I have captured a city whose description I shall refrain from, suffice to say I have seized therein 4000 villas with 4000 baths, 40,000 poll tax paying Jews and, 400 places of entertainment for royalty."

Hearing this news the Caliph entertained Amr's messenger, who had borne him the letter, with bread and dates and later they assembled in a thanksgiving service at the Prophet's mosque.

Following this victory, Amr went on to capture the remaining fortresses in Egypt and thus, it came under the mantle of Islam. Indigenous Jews and Christians were free to practice their beliefs; Roman taxes were abolished and the country developed and improved. The Egyptians had never before enjoyed such a period of prosperity and peace.

In those days it was the custom in Egypt to sacrifice a young and beautiful maiden every year to appease the River Nile so that it would flood and bring them water. After the conquest of Egypt this practice was reported to Umar who immediately prohibited it. It happened that year that the Nile had less water than usual and a drought ensued. Amr wrote to Umar to seek his advice and Umar

wrote him the following letter and instructed Amr to throw it into the Nile.

"From Umar, the servant of God and Amir of the Muslims, to the River Nile of Egypt. O Nile! If you flow of your own desire, we do not need you. If you flow by the order of God Almighty, we pray to Him to keep you flowing."

The letter was duly thrown into the waters of the Nile and it over flowed that year. In this way Egyptians were stopped from practicing an un-Islamic and inhuman custom. Thus they were made to understand the spiritual power of Islam and accordingly, they embraced Islam wholeheartedly.

CHAPTER THREE

Summary of Umar's Achievements for Islam

On Wednesday 27th of Dhul Hijjah in the year 23 H. (643 C.E.), the glorious reign of Umar came to an end with his death at the age of sixty one years. A Persian servant belonging to Mughirah ibn Shu'bah, named Lu' Lu' Firoze, had complained about his master to Umar, however the complaint was not genuine and so Umar had disregarded it. The following morning as Umar went to the mosque to perform his prayers, the servant, who had secreted himself in a corner, lunged out at Umar stabbing him six times and then killed himself before the Muslims could overpower him. The Caliph died of his wound the next morning.

When it had become clear to the Muslims that he would not survive, they sought his designation of a successor. He appointed a panel of six notable Muslims, Uthman, Ali, Zubair, Talha, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Abd al Rahman ibn Auf to select a Caliph from among themselves to succeed him. He then asked Aishah for permission to be buried alongside the Prophet. Although she had reserved this place for herself, she agreed to Umar's request and he was placed in a grave at the side of the Prophet's burial place.

Achievements for Islam

The Caliphate of Umar can undoubtedly be described as the Golden Age of Islam in every respect. Umar was a man of extraordinary genius who not only fashioned the destiny of the Islamic na-

tion but made history in his own right. He followed the way of the Prophet to the greatest degree. Under Umar's rule, Islam grew to be a world power and the mighty Empires of Persia and Rome were overcome by its strength. In the ten years of his reign the entire Persian Empire, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and a part of Turkey was brought under the banner of Islam. He was not only a conqueror but also an exemplary administrator who originated an efficient system of administration, being the first to effect, the political system of Islam. He enforced Divine Law (Shariah) as the law of the International Islamic State and, he safeguarded internal security by means of a police force, he distributed grants to the needy and, constructed barracks and fortresses for the protection of the Islamic armies. He founded new cities which nurtured the growth of Islamic culture and civilisation and, he ameliorated agriculture and economics in the Islamic State. He was the founder of the Islamic educational system. In summary, he achieved the foundation and effectuation of the basic elements for every aspect of the administration of the Islamic State.

Character

His success lay in his two main characteristics, being, the fear of God and, love for the Prophet. He was extremely pious, he never used oil from the Public Treasury to light a lamp at night for his own use. Whenever he had finished official duties he put the lamp out. Umar used to patrol the streets of the city at night himself to see to the needs and requirements of the people and the city. He took his wife to work as a midwife for the poor people and the salary he received from the Public Treasury was so meager that it hardly sufficed himself and his family. When some of the notable Muslims urged him to increase his own allowance, he said: "The Prophet has left us an example, I must follow him."

Umar was the most just and fair of all rulers in Islamic history. All citizens, not excluding the Caliph himself, were equal before the law. On one occasion, he appeared before a court in Madinah to elucidate his position against a complaint. The Judge wanted to stand up in his honour, but he did not permit him to do so, in order that there would be no distinction between himself and any other person. This was an example of true democracy which modern so-called democratic systems could draw benefit from, today.

After Abu Bakr, he was the greatest Caliph of Islam, and the most exemplary character. He was selfless in his devotion to the cause of God. Muslims will forever remain indebted to his achievements in the service of Islam.

Piety

In his attire, eating habits and general behavior, he conducted himself in a way similar to that of the Prophet. His clothes were often patched and worn off and, he always ate simple meals. Once Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan invited him to a banquet and when special dishes were presented before him, he stopped eating and said: "I swear by God, in Whose hand is my life, if you do not follow the ways of the Prophet, God will distance you from the Straight Path." He never abandoned his characteristic simplicity, even through he reigned over an Empire that stretched from Iran to Tripoli, he could be seen sitting on a mat made of dried grass.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) feared God in complete devotion, it was his habit to cry and weep during prayer. Sometimes he passed the entire night performing prayer and weeping before God, and because his tears ran so profusely his beard became wet. It was also his habit to weep during the dawn prayer and, on listening or reading the verses of the Qur'an which contained descriptions of Hell Fire and the Day of Judgment, he would weep to such an extent that his whole beard was soaked. Once when he was leading the dawn prayer he recited the following verse from Surah Yusef (Joseph)

"I only complain of my sorrow and grief to God, and I know from God that which you do not know." (Surah 12 verse 86)

At this he began to weep and his voice was heard as far as the back row of the congregation, and he continued to weep until his eyes were red and swollen.

He had such fear of being brought to account for his deeds on

the Day of Judgment that he once took hold of a straw and said: "I wish I was this straw ." He used to sacrifice almost all his wealth in the cause of God and His Prophet. He once said: "I love the Prophet more than anything, even my life." Hearing this, the Prophet remarked: "Nobody is a true Muslim until he loves me more than everything in this world, including his own life."

His conviction in the Unity of God was immovable, when, as Caliph, he performed Hajj he went to kiss the Black Stone as is customary in the rites of the pilgrimage and while doing so, he remarked: "I know that you are a stone, you cannot harm anyone nor benefit anyone. If I had not seen the Prophet of God kiss you I would never have kissed you." Such was his strict adherence to the principles of Islam and the ways of the Prophet.

Umar's Scholastic Achievements

There had been no tradition in Arabia, before the advent of Islam, of reading or writing. In fact there were only seventeen people among the Quraish who could read or write when the Prophet began to receive Revelations from God Almighty, through the angel Gabriel. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was one of these few, his writing and lectures are still found in ancient books.

The first speech he delivered as Caliph is as follows:

"O God, When I am stringent, make me gentle, when I am weak give me strength. The Arabs are like refractory camels. I will endeavour to bring them to the straight path."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had an interest in poetry and sometimes he composed verses, he was one of the most fluent of the Quraish and the subtlety of his composition can only be appreciated by those who have mastered the Arabic language. Besides his literary talent, he was a great Islamic Jurist and Theologian. Out of the fear he held of making an error, he never quoted a Hadith (saying of the Prophet) even though he was well conversed in them. Nor did he permit anyone else to quote a Hadith unless that person brought a witness to attest its authenticity, failing to do so, he would have the person punished. He was an expert in deriving law from the Qur'an and Hadith and, volumes of his judgments and verdicts have been compiled. He initiated the process of 'Ijtihad' through which, matters of law and jurisprudence are settled within the spirit of the Shariah, and throughout his reign he resolved numerous cases of dispute.

Propagation of Islam

Since his prime duty was the propagation of Islam, the various wars and battles had been fought only against those who sought to actively hinder the Muslims from this duty. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was always resolute in instructing his armies to call the people to Islam before resorting to confrontation, and his commanders had standing orders to that effect. No war was ever started before an invitation had been given to the people to embrace Islam, and then only if the Muslims were hindered from spreading God's Message to the people. Nor were any people ever compelled to accept Islam or to forsake their own creed.

Islam was preached by demonstration. The Muslim soldiers

were examples to the people of, Islamic life, and often seeing this, the inhabitants of a place were attracted to embrace Islam. The Muslim soldiers were never permitted to take possessions or property of a conquered population. Because of the exemplary way in which the Muslim soldiers conducted themselves, often, entire armies accepted Islam. After the battle of Qadisiya, a battalion of four thousand chiefs entered the fold of Islam together with their populations. A commander of the army of Yezdgird, named Siyah, embraced Islam with his battalion during the battle in Persia. All the inhabitants of the town of Bulhat in Egypt, embraced Islam at one time, only through seeing the piety of the Muslims. A rich merchant and the chief of a town in Egypt, named Shata, embraced Islam together with all the inhabitants of the place, after hearing only about the character and piety of the Muslims before the Muslims had even reached the town.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) ensured very strictly that no non-Muslim was ever forced to accept Islam. Through his letters, advice and speeches, he impressed upon all the Muslims that they had to adhere to the ways of the Prophet as the only method of propagating Islam.

CHAPTER FOUR
Government

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) formed the first State based upon the Islamic system of administration, major aspects of which were later incorporated in Western democracies, thus, he was the pioneer of modern civilisation and democracy. As an administrator his example is unparalleled not only in Islamic history but also, in the history of modern time. During the ten years of his reign as Caliph, a vast part of the Middle East, Persian Empire and Byzantium were conquered, these territories he consolidated into a state governed by Islam. The constitution of the Caliphate was based entirely on Islam, all matters were decided only after consultation with the Shura Council, he would remark: "It is vital for a Khalifah to consult with his Shura." And once he said: "I do not desire that you follow anything that arises from my caprice." Umar always stated that he should only be obeyed as long as he was obeying God and His Messenger.

Under Islam, Muslims and non-Muslims were treated alike although the Arabian Peninsula was an Islamic State and the Muslims were the majority by far, his attitude towards the non-Muslims was extremely tolerant. He permitted Jews and Christians to remain living in the Peninsula, if they so wished, and no one was permitted to harass them or hinder them in matters pertaining to their belief. Those of the non-Muslims who wished to migrate were ensured safe passage to the borders and Umar ordered that they be compensated for any property they left behind.

The Shura in the Islamic State

The Shura was comprised of three main bodies, the first consisted of prominent and popular Companions among whom were Uthman, Ali, Abd Al Rahman ibn Auf, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zaid ibn Thabit, Talha and Zubair. They were the permanent members of the Shura Council and all important matters went before them for their consultative decision.

The second body of the Shura Council comprised, the General Advisory Council which was composed of many Companions from among the Ansar and Muhajirin. Those Companions who had participated in the battle of Badr were afforded priority in this council which also included the chiefs of the various clans and tribes. It dealt with matters of general interest.

The third body consisted of some select Companions from among the Muhajirin and Ansar, it ranked in between the Higher and the General Advisory Councils. This Shura dealt specifically with matters of special concern.

Whenever a Shura was assembled, any of its members were free to express their opinion without hinderance or hesitation. On many occasions Umar reminded them: "I am merely an ordinary person like yourselves, I can do no more than ask you to cooperate in the work with which you have entrusted me."

Assembly of the Shura

The Special Shura was comprised of only a few members and there was no special way to convene it. The General Council of

Advisors was convened by means of a man calling the words: "Al Salat al Jami'ah" from the Prophet's Mosque. Hearing his call, the people would know that a meeting of the Shura had been summoned and they would assemble in the Mosque. Umar would first offer two 'Raka' of optional prayer and then place the matter before the Shura. Everyone was permitted to express his opinion and decisions were usually made on a basis of a unanimous decision or by majority. However, if in the interests of Islam he deemed them not proper, the Caliph had the power to veto them.

Freedom of Opinion

The concept of freedom of opinion, which is often only thought of as, one of the freedoms of the modern age, was alive and well in the first Islamic system, in fact there is no other example in history, of a time when the ordinary people were free to criticise the ruler without fear of repercussion. Umar's period of rule was exemplary as far as this concept was concerned. He introduced this principle to the Muslims in the following speech:

"O people! I am only a trustee of your property and wealth, in the same way a person is a trustee of the property and wealth of an orphan. Had I been rich, I would not have taken any allowance for my services. If I am in need, I will take only to the extent of my need. Friends! You have certain rights over me and you are fully permitted to claim your rights at any time. One such right is that you do not permit me to misappropriate the Jizya (indemnity tax) and the war spoils. You have the right to ensure that the poor, the needy and, the disabled among you receive allowances for their livelihood. You have the right to ensure that the borders of the

State are secure and that you are not in danger."

Umar's address clearly shows the principles of equality and liberality as the basis of his administration. On one occasion some bales of cloth were brought to Madinah as part of the war spoils. In accordance with Islamic Law, they were distributed among the Muslims and each one received a length of material not long enough to make a shirt. The following Friday, Umar arrived at the Mosque to deliver his Khutbah (sermon) dressed in a long shirt of the same cloth. As soon as he stepped up to the pulpit a man stood up and asked Umar to account for his shirt. Without becoming angry, Umar stepped down from the pulpit and asked his son to explain on his behalf. His son told the congregation that he had given his own share of cloth to his father so that he was able to make a shirt from the two lengths. Hearing this the man was appeased.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once gathered the people and asked them, by way of testing them: "If I do not obey the Shariah (Divine Law) what will you do?"

At once a Bedouin stood up and replied in a harsh tone: "O Umar! we would straighten you as we straighten our arrows for the bow." At this, Umar was well pleased.

A man once stood up at a public meeting and said: "O Umar, fear God." The audience tried to stop him but Umar said: "Let him speak, he is free to express his opinion, if people do not express their opinions they are useless, and if we do not listen to them we too are useless."

Women also enjoyed the same freedom of expression. Once Umar suggested that the quantity of a dowry to be fixed at the time

of marriage, which was not in accordance with Islamic principle. A veiled lady immediately stood up and said: "O Umar, fear God." Hearing this, Umar realised his mistake and gratefully accepted her reproach.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was a strict ruler with regard to the implementation of Islamic Law, however, he was at the same time, just and democratic in his administration of Islam, which permits the freedom of opinion, expression and, thought within the limits of Shariah (God's Law). He ensured that the principles of equality and brotherhood of mankind were acted upon with justice and veracity, making no discrimination in matters of justice, human rights and equity, between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Administration of the Provinces

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) established an outstanding role model for succeeding Muslim rulers, his policies enduring long after his death. It was these abiding principles and concepts which were the foundation of his success.

One of his achievements was, the division of the Islamic State into various provinces each with a governor in each capital. In the year 23 H. they stood as follows:

The province of Hijaz with Makkah as its capital, governed by Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan.

The province of Syria whose capitol was Damascus, governed by Abu Musa al Ash'ari.

The province of Iraq with Kufa as its capital, governed by Mughirah ibn Shu'bah.

The province of Egypt with Fustat as its capital, governed by Amr ibn al As.

The province of Palestine whose capital was Jerusalem, governed by Alqamah ibn Majaz.

The province of Jazirah (ancient Mesopotamia) with Homs as its capital, governed by Umair ibn Sa'd.

The central province of Arabia with Madinah as its capital.

The capital of the State was Madinah, the title of the Provincial Governors were 'Wali', they were also chief administrators and supreme commanders of the armed forces of each province. Ranking after the 'Wali' were the following officers: The Treasury Officer, the Revenue Collector, the Chief of Police, the Judge. In provinces where the governor did not hold the office of the commander of armed forces, a separate commander was appointed. In Kufa, for example, at first there was Amar ibn Yasir as Wali, Uthman ibn Hanif as Revenue Collector, Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud as Treasury Officer, Shuraih as the Judge and Abd Allah ibn Khaza'i as the Secretary of Defence. Usually the officers were appointed after consultation with the Shura.

The provinces were divided into districts, each district was administered by an officer called 'Amil'. All the governors and high officers of the province were summoned to Makkah each year on the occasion of Hajj, when Muslims from the entire region gathered there. Any complaint against them was duly registered by the Caliph and grievances were dealt with. Officers were paid substan-

tial remuneration in order that they would not incline to bribery or corruption of any kind in the execution of their duties.

The Caliph as Religious Head of State

As a religious State, the governors, besides the Caliph, were also scholars of Islam. They were primarily pious, and carried out the duties of administrative officers, theologians and jurists. The Caliph himself, was the head of the Religious State, he had the duty of leading the compulsory prayers five times a day in the Prophet's Mosque at Madinah, he would also lead the 'Eid' (feast day) prayers there.

When it was the time of Hajj, he was the leader of the Hajj and in his absence someone would be appointed by him to stand as his deputy. In religious matters he used to hand down his verdict based upon the Shariah (God's Law). In case of a question of law, he usually consulted with a special committee for that purpose, working under a department of Jurists. Sometimes he sent the matter directly to the committee. Ali, Uthman, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Abd Al Rahman ibn Auf, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Zaid ibn Thabit, Abu Hurairah and Abu Darda' were the chief Jurists in Madinah. The Caliph did not hesitate to consult with them concerning any Hadith which he did not know. At the same time he did not permit anyone to quote or narrate a Hadith without bringing forward a witness to its authenticity.

As well as performing the duty of administration, each governor was also the religious head of the province. He had to lead the five compulsory prayers in the nearest mosque, the Friday prayer in the main mosque of the capital, and the Eid prayers.

The Judiciary

The judges were charged with the judicial functions, a Qadi (judge) was completely free of the executive administration. On many occasions the Caliph himself appeared before the Judge to defend himself in a dispute. The provincial judges were completely independent of the provincial governors. The judges were paid excellent salaries so that they would not fall victim to the temptations of bribery. The monthly salary of a Judge such as Salman, Rabi'ah and Shuraih was 500 Dirhams. The monthly salary of Amir Mu'awiyah was 1000 Dirhams. Umar was the first ruler of Islam to fix salaries for judges and to make their offices distinct from the executive officers.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) sent the following ordinance to the various Judges:

"It is essential for a Judge to be just in his decision and he should not give any preference to the persons considered eminent in society. The complainants should produce proof in support of their case while the defendants are allowed to take an oath. Agreement between the two parties is permissible except when such agreement makes an unlawful act lawful or, a lawful act unlawful. If truth is known after a decision has been given, you are permitted to reconsider the case and change the decision. When you do not find specific guidance in the Qur'an or in the Hadith for decision of a case, ponder over it on the basis of the broader principles of Shariah and search for its solution in the light of past decisions handed down by the righteous predecessors. Failing this, then apply your own mind based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

In another ordinance Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) instructed the Judges thus:

"Decide any case according to the Qur'an, If you do not find any solution in it, base your decision upon the Sunnah. If you do not find an appropriate Hadith, search in the unanimity of the righteous predecessors, in the absence of this, give your verdict based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

The Judges appointed by Umar were among the most Godfearing, truthful and trustworthy Muslims of his time. Besides their piety, they were also talented Jurists and eminent scholars. The Judge of Madinah was Zaid ibn Thabit who had written down the Revelations for the Prophet. (peace and prayers be upon him) There were two judges at Kufa, Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud and Shuraih. Other judges during his caliphate were Salman ibn Rabi', Abd Al Rahman ibn Rabi', Imran ibn Hasin, Abu Maryam and Jamil ibn al Umar (may God be pleased with them).

The Judges were instructed to be impartial and absolve themselves from the executive. In a dispute between Umar and Ubayy ibn Ka'b, Umar went to the court of Zaid ibn Thabit at Madinah. Zaid wanted to stand up to show respect to the Caliph, at which Umar remarked: "This is your first unjust action." Then Umar sat with Ubayy like any other person. In the same case, Ubayy wanted Umar to swear an oath, but Zaid wanted to spare him from doing this because of the dignity of his position. At this Umar admonished him saying: "You cannot be a just Judge until a common man is equal to the Umar who stands before you."

As Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was also a jurist, he held court and sometimes at the Court of Appeal. He once inflicted

the Shariah punishment of eighty lashes for drinking upon his own son Abu Sahmah, which resulted in his death. There are numerous examples which demonstrate Islamic justice, which prevailed at the time of his caliphate. Muslims and non-Muslims were both equal before his court. When on one occasion a Muslim killed a Christian, Umar handed down a sentence of capital punishment. After congregational prayer every day he used to sit in the Mosque to listen to any complaint the people might bring before him.

Islamic Education

Umar was actively interested in the propagation of Islamic knowledge to the Muslims. The Qur'an had been compiled in book form during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, on Umar's insistence. He founded schools in all the provinces and territories for teaching the Qur'an, these schools were located in the Mosques. Besides instructing people in the Qur'an, these schools were also instrumental in bringing literacy to the people. Umar instructed the governors of the various provinces to construct at least one mosque in every city or town. In Kufa, a separate Mosque was built for each clan, it has been recorded that he constructed as many as four thousand mosques. In Makkah, the Mosque was too small for the increasing Muslim population, so Umar had it extended and built a wall around it to separate it from the town. He covered the Ka'bah with a rich cloth sent from Egypt, a tradition which continued until this century. The Mosque of the Prophet was also extended, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) bought all the houses and properties surrounding the mosque as well as the houses of the widows of the Prophet, and extended the Mosque. A large platform was con-

structed in the yard to serve as a place for instructing people in Islam.

The following teachers were appointed in the provinces of Syria and Palestine: Ubaidah ibn Samit, Mu'adh ibn Jabal and Abu Darda'. They established schools in Homs, Palestine and Damascus. Abu Sufyan was appointed to teach the Bedouins, he was charged with testing the knowledge of the Muslims learning the Qur'an. It was compulsory for every Muslim to memorize sufficient parts of the Qur'an, especially the Chapters (Surah) of 'The Cow', 'Women', 'The Table', 'The Pilgrimage' and 'The Light',. (Chapters 2,4,5,22 and 24 respectively). In these Surah, Islamic Law and principles are detailed. To know basic Islamic Law was compulsory. Thus the concept of compulsory education was introduced at a time in history when such an idea was unheard of Students who achieved complete memorization of the Qur'an were awarded scholarships.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also appointed teachers to instruct Hadith and Islamic Law. Abd Allah ibn Mus'ud was dispatched to Kufa for this purpose, Ma'qal ibn Yair and Imran ibn Hasin to Basrah, and in addition to the Qur'an, Ubadah ibn Samit taught Hadith and Islamic Law in Syria.

The Formation of a Police Force and Prisons

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) founded the first police force in history to keep order in the state, and he appointed Abu Hurairah as the Chief of Police for the Province of Bahrain. As he prepared to leave to take up his position, Umar gave him the following instructions:

"Keep the peace in the region, do not let the people contravene the Law. They should not measure or weigh incorrectly. No one should build any house on roads so as to hinder the passage of the people. No one should overload any animal. No one is permitted to sell or buy liqueur."

There being no jail in Arabia, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) bought five houses in Makkah and allocated them as prisons. He also established jails in the various provinces. Punishment by exile was introduced by Umar for the first time, and he exiled Abu Mihjan Thaqafi to an island, as a punishment for drinking alcohol.

The Public Treasury and the Admistration of Revenue

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also ordered the construction of a number of rest houses for travellers in addition to many new road and bridges. The road between Makkah and Madinah was broadened, and rest houses and police posts were stationed along it.

The Prophet (ppuh), had established the Public Treasury in the form of a common fund for the benefit of the population. During the time of Abu Bakr, a house was bought to house it but during the Caliphate of Umar, the Public Treasury increased immensely. Umar reorganised the entire system on sound and fair principles. Treasury Houses were built in all provinces and officers in charge of them were appointed, guards were also appointed. In Madinah, the Central Treasury where, overall accounts and control was kept, was constructed under the supervision of a Persian engineer who

used the same type of cement as was used in the palaces of the Persian Emperors.

Revenue was derived from the following main sources:

Jizya (indemnity Tax)

Zakat (Poor Tax)

Khiraj (Land Tax)

Ushr (Special Land Tax)

(War Spoils

Tax on non-Muslim traders au lieu of Zakat.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) introduced the tax upon the non-Muslim traders because they did not pay Zakat, while Muslim merchants and traders had to pay it. Ushr, the special land tax, was equal to one tenth of the produce derived from substantial holdings.

The Zakat fund was kept in a special account book and was distributed in accordance with Islamic Law, as prescribed in the Qur'an. Expenditure was on general administration and the needs of war were met from the fund. The surplus was distributed among the Muslims. For example, the participants of the battle of Badr received 5000 Dirhams each, and those who took part in the battle of Uhud or the Treaty of Hudaibiya received 4000 Dirhams each. The Muslims who embraced Islam before the conquest of Makkah but after the Treaty of Hudaibiya received 3000 each. Those who fought in Syria or Iraq received 2000 each and those who took part in other battles after that, received 1000 each. An ordinary soldier who fought during the time of Umar received 500 to 600 Dirhams.

The stipend was given to every Muslim, male or female, young or old. The writer and historian, Sir William Muir comments in his book "Caliphate":

"A people dividing amongst themselves the whole revenues, spoils and conquests of the State, on the basis of an equal brotherhood is a spectacle probably without parallel in the world."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had a reputation for caution before spending the Public Fund. In one instance, his daughter Umm al Mu'minin, Hafsah came to him and asked for some share in the booty that had come from a battlefield, saying: "Give me a share as your relatives have certain rights over you." Umar replied: "Of course my relatives have certain rights over me, in my personal belongings, but not in the property of the Muslims."

When Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) fell ill and the physician advised him to take honey, there was an abundance of honey in the Public Treasury. Umar went to the Prophet's Mosque and summoned a Shura, when the people assembled he asked them: "I need some honey, I would be grateful if you can permit me to take some honey from the Public Treasury."

On seeing a fat camel being sold in the marketplace, he inquired about its owner and was told, it belonged to a man who allowed it to graze in the public pasture. Umar told the man: "You are entitled to get as much as the camel would have fetched before it grazed in the official pasture. The balance must go to the Public Treasury."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) took personal charge of the property held in the Public Treasury, once a camel ran away and he went himself to search for it. Meanwhile, a chief of a clan

came to meet with him. Umar said to the chief: "I am searching for a camel belonging to the Public Treasury, please help me find it."

Such was Umar's vigilance and sense of propriety in administering the funds and properties of the Public Treasury.

Administration of Land

There having been no administration in Arabia before Islam, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) introduced a complete administrative system based upon Islamic principles. When Iraq was conquered, he did not permit the distribution of estate among the soldiers, rather, he granted it to the Islamic State as official property. Many objections were raised at this by some of the Companions, and after consulting with the Shura Council, Umar devised a plan in which he ordered the survey of the conquered land in Iraq and had land tax assessed according to the income of the farmers. No tax was levied on land which was in trust for places of worship or for orphans. Forests were considered State property. Large estates, owned by individuals were not taken from them. In other provinces such as in Egypt and Syria, the same system was enforced as had been before Islam as far as the ownership of estates was concerned. However, estates which were owned by Imperial Officers of the Roman Empire were confiscated and distributed among the farmers. No Muslim was permitted to take over any piece of land except by the purchase of it.

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) constructed numerous irrigation canals. In Egypt alone, one hundred and twenty thousand labourers were paid by the State to construct numerous canals from the River Nile, many of which can still be seen to this day. A nine

mile canal was built in Basrah which carried fresh water from the River Tigris. Many governers also built canals in their provinces, among them Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who constructed the first canal in Kufa.

Indemnity Tax (Jizya)

The raising of the Jizya tax from the non-Muslim populations within the Islamic State has been much misunderstood by Western commentators. This tax was in fact raised primarily for their safety against invasion from the outside. The Muslims undertook protecting such people and, if they took any help from the non-Muslims in their protection, the tax did not have to be paid. Also, whenever Muslims withdrew from a conquered region or county, the Jizya was returned to the non-Muslim people of that place.

One such agreement was signed by the Muslims with the inhabitants of Jarjan:

"It is our responsibility to protect you and your property against any invasion and you will pay annual Jizya (tax) in lieu thereof. If we seek your help in protecting you, we will not charge any tax."

In another agreement signed at Adharbijan, taxation was decreed:

"...Jizya will not be taken from those who serve in the army during the year of service."

This was in accordance with Umar's instructions that no tax was to be levied on those who help the Muslim cavalry. Abu Ubaidah, the commander at the Syrian front, returned all the Jizya he had received when he left the conquered places temporarily, in order to

make safe ground to prepare against the Romans at Yarmuk. Utmost care was exercised when levying the Jizya, the poor and orphans were exempt, as well as old persons who were unable to work. These conditions can be seen in the agreement signed at Hirah:

"If any old man is unable to earn, or if a rich man becomes poor, or if a person meets with an accident, then no Jizya will be charged from him. Muslims are responsible to take care of such persons and to pay for their needs from the Public Treasury."

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once saw an old man begging, he asked him why he was doing so. The old man said that he had to pay Jizya. Umar immediately brought him to his home and gave him some money. He then ordered his officers not to charge Jizya from such persons. Umar was so caring for the non-Muslims that he left a will instructing: "Take care of the non-Muslims, do not break any agreement with them. Do not force them to work in ways they cannot tolerate. Fight for their protection if they are attacked."

It has never been known in the history of modern or ancient warfare that the enemy has been treated with such consideration and ethics.

Grants to Disabled Persons and the Needy

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to personally attend to the care of the public, on one occasion a caravan came to Madinah and alighted outside the city. He himself, stood guard over it during the night and attended to their needs. He was accustomed to

go out at night to see the needs of the people, one night as he was doing the rounds of the city he saw a woman with some children on the outskirts of the city. The children were crying from hunger, Umar brought some flour and butter from the Public Treasury and prepared them a meal himself. His servant, Aslam, tried to assist him, but he said: "You cannot help Umar on the Day of Judgment. I alone will be brought to account." Once, he saw a Bedouin outside the city with his wife who was in the throes of child birth. He immediately summoned his wife, who worked as a midwife, to assist the lady.

In addition to the allowances described above, he also gave stipends to the poor and the disabled, regardless of their faith or belief. This was historically the first instance of a 'disability allowance' as we know it today, of which many Western societies erroneously consider themselves to be the originators.

The Foundation of New Cities

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) founded a number of new cities all over the Islamic State, some of these cities were strategically vital and the aim of their function was varied, among the most important of them was Basrah, in Iraq which was built in 14 H. It was, as it still is today, a vital port on the border with Iran, it gave people of the Mesopotamia region their most convenient access to the sea. At its inception, it had a population of only 800 but this rapidly swelled to around 100,000. During the rule of the Ummayad dynasty it was a sizable city with some 120,00 inhabitants. Kufa, too was an important city, it was constructed in the central part of Iraq and became the capital. Initially, residences for 40,000

people were built. Umar took particular interest in its construction and sent maps and a plan for the city which he had himself designed. The streets were 60 feet wide and the principle Mosque could accommodate 40,000 people. It was often referred to by Umar as the 'Head of Islam'. Famous scholars among whom were Nakh'i, Hammad, Abu Hanifah and Shubi lived in this great city. It became the centre of Islamic knowledge and learning in later times, just as Umar had foretold in his description of it.

Mosul, which is still known by the same name today was originally a small village in Iraq, It lay in the centre of the Eastern region of Iraq and Umar converted it into a city. Jizah was located to the west of the Islamic state and was constructed after the victory of Alexandria in Egypt which assured its security.

The city of Fustat was built in Egypt by Amr ibn al As in the 4th century H. on the orders of Umar. It grew into a much larger city in following periods of Islamic history and was known as the most beautiful city after Baghdad.

Agriculture

Farming was the prime source of income and livelyhood at the time of Umar's Caliphate. He exerted particular concern for the farmers and agriculture as a whole. He planted many gardens and passed a law prohibiting any Muslim from acquiring land from people in occupied territories unless, it was sold to them by mutual agreement. He gave financial support to both Muslim and non-Muslim farmers, a concept which has only been introduced in the last century in Western societies. Uncultivated tracts of land were the property of the State, however, Umar also introduced incentive

schemes for people who did not own land, in which uncultivated land could be acquired by the permission of the government. Such land would become the property of the person farming it, within three years. In this way large areas of land were cultivated and agricultural output was increased.

Introduction of the Islamic Calendar

Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) also introduced the Islamic calendar which remains in the same form until today. The beginning of the calendar year was fixed as the date of the Hijrah (Migration) of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah, consequently the calendar is known as the Hijrah calendar.

Army

One of Umar's most notable achievements was the formation of a regular Islamic army, he encouraged Muslims to enlist in the regular forces of the State whenever the need arose. Thus, for the first time in Islamic history enlisted and non-enrolled men were categorised with separate registers being kept for both regular and irregular armies. All personnel were well paid and their families were given allowances. Umar did not permit military personnel to possess land in the conquered territories, so that there would be no ethical conflict of interest.

Quarters were built for the soldiers where they lived in accordance with Islamic Law. These barracks, later became centres of Islamic culture and knowledge and served to preserve Islamic identity in the midst of non-Islamic societies. Central barracks were built in Madinah, Kufa, Basrah, Mosul, Fustat, Damascus, Homs,

Jordan, Palestine (Jerusalem) and Ramalah. Each army comprised of the commanding officer, translators, doctors, surgeons and detectives. Every Corps of soldiers was headed by an officer, whose duty was to distribute salaries, dress and other necessities. The minimum salary of a soldier was 200 to 300 Dirhams a year in addition to his personal necessities and family allowances. Some officers were given salaries ranging from 7000 to 10,000 Dirhams a year. No regular military personnel were permitted to undertake any kind of business or agriculture. It was compulsory for every soldier to be trained in swimming, riding and walking bare foot. The army was generally divided into both cavalry and infantry.

There were large granaries in the barracks to supply food to the military personnel. Each central barrack had at least four thousand horses for the cavalry. Stables were provided along with large pasture areas and the horses were given excellent care and attention.

The protection of the frontiers was a major concern, Abd Allah ibn Qais was the officer charged with this duty. He built a number of fortresses on the borders of the State. After the Muslims had conquered the Persian Empire and a major part of Byzantium, the number of soldiers in all the Islamic armies was counted, they amounted to, about one million equipped soldiers in all. Although Umar had decreed that, every Muslim was a soldier and indeed everyone was ready to fight in God's cause. There were also a number of non-Muslims in the armies, as well as non-Arabs who had become Muslims during the time of Abu Bakr and in Umar's time as well, and they had participated in the wars of Jihad.

The health of army personnel was a prime concern and great care was taken for the soldiers. When Umar heard in 17H. that the

climate in the conquered town of Mada'in was unsuitable for the soldiers, he ordered Utbah ibn Ghazwan that the soldiers should be permitted to go to suitable places during the autumn and barracks were built for this purpose. There was an effective mail system, correspondence was carried by entrusted persons from the army in Madinah, to other places in the State and vice versa. Umar's introduction of a mail system at this time in history was unheard of, in Arabia and in most other places of the world. Thus, the soldiers could keep in touch with family members and relatives in other towns.

The Caliph directed the entire army from Madinah, he was commander in chief of the armed forces, but he delegated his power to a nominated commander in chief in each province. These commanders were constantly in contact with the Caliph and took instructions from him. Umar introduced a military code in which no soldier, whose family was not resident at the barracks, would be away from his family for more than four months. Every four months, they could visit their homes on leave. The same code was applied to civil servants whose families did not accompany them.

Preservation of the Integrity of Islamic Customs

The barracks were usually annexed to civil quarters, as they grew, this eventually led to the development of new cities. These Muslim quarters were established in the conquered territories in the form of model Islamic towns, and as such, served a dual function, firstly, they functioned to preserve the Muslims from the effects of

living among a non Islamic population and showed the non-Muslim people the practical shape of Islamic society. It was ultimately the charm of Islam which attracted them to accept the Religion and to change their non-Islamic beliefs, traditions, culture and even language. This could never had been achieved by duress. If Muslim quarters had not been established in such a way at that time, it would have been difficult for Islam to permeate into the fabric of those countries which are today proud to call themselves. Islamic States. Arabic was not the indigenous language of Syria, Egypt or Iraq when these places were conquered by the Muslims, but the love of God, His Prophet and His Book motivated the people of these places not only to embrace Islam but, to adopt the language of the Qur'an as their spoken tongue. All this was achieved through the genius of Umar.

The Third Caliph

ÛTHMAN IBN ÅFFAN

(May Allah be pleased with him)

Caliphate period:- 24 H. to 36 H. [644 to 656 C.E.]

The Caliph Uthman ibn Affan said:

"Everything has its own misfortune, every piece of good luck brings its own disgrace. The misfortune brought by this religion, the grief which accompanies the gift which it represents for us, is the critics and the slanderers. They show you exactly what you want to see, and conceal from you the faults which you would find unpleasant to consider."

CHAPTER ONE

Ancestry

Uthman ibn Åffan (may Allah be pleased with him) was born in the year 573 C.E. in Makkah into a family of Quraish. His ancestry joins with that of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) in the fifth generation. He was a descendant of the Umayyah family of Quraish which was a well reputed family of Makkah. Descendants of the Umayyah are known as Banu Umayyah " Umawwin".

Although his father's name was Âffan ibn Abu al-As, thus his proper name was Uthman ibn Affan, Uthman was known by his patryonic name of Abu Amr. Uthman was one of the few people in Makkah who were able to read and write. When he reached adulthood he started to trade in cloth, this business brought him great wealth and success. He used his money in a benevolent manner and always helped the poor and needy. Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was a kind hearted and gentle natured man, he never hesitated to spend any sum of money to assist a man in difficulty and due to these noble qualities the people of Makkah had the highest regard for him.

Acceptance of Islam

Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) embraced Islam upon the exhortation of Abu Bakr, he was one of the very first to become Muslim in the early days of Islam, this was in spite of the fact that the Banu Hashim, from which family the Prophet came, were rivals

of the Banu Umayyah, Uthman's family. The Banu Umayyah were in power at that time, however, Uthman unhesitatingly acknowledged the Prophethood of Mohammed (peace and prayers be upon him) and accordingly the authority and supremacy of the Banu Hashim. The opposition to the Prophet from other notables of the Quraish, such as Abu Sufyan who also belonged to the Banu Umayyah, was due in part to this reason.

Uthman had the clarity of mind to rise above such worldly and ephemeral considerations. He had been greatly loved by the Quraish before his acceptance of Islam, but afterwards they became his sworn enemies and even his relatives rebuked and chastised him harshly.

Uthman was first married to the daughter of the Prophet, Ruqayyah, who died in Madinah while the Prophet was away on the expedition of Badr. The Prophet (ppuh) had ordered Uthman to remain at his daughter's side, to care for her and so he had not been able to participate in the battle of Badr. After the death of Ruqayyah, the Prophet gave Uthman his other daughter, Umm Kulthum. Thus, he united in bond of family and blood Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, who had married the Prophet's other daughter Fatimah. Umm Kulthum died in the year 9 H. His first wife Ruqayyah bore him a son, Abd Allah, who died in childhood. Umm Kulthum bore him no children. Following the death of his second wife, he married the following at different times, Fakhtah bint Walid, Umm Amr bint Jundah, Fatimah bint Shaibah, Umm Banin bint Uwainah, Ramlah bint Shaibah, Aishah, Umm Aban and Nailah bint Farafsah, who was his last wife. Eleven sons were born to him from his wives, some of them died in infancy. One of his sons, Aban, be-

came famous and held a high position during the Umawwin rule. He also had six or seven daughters.

The Prophet's daughter Ruqayyah had been previously married to the son of Abu Lahab, a vehement enemy of Islam. When the Prophet received his mission, Ruqayyah divorced Abu Lahab's son and then the Prophet offered her in marriage to Uthman.

Emigration to Abyssinia

Uthman and his wife Ruqayyah were among the first Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia, when the situation in Makkah became intolerable. After having sought the permission of the Prophet, he and his wife crossed the Red Sea and entered Abyssinia where they remained for about two months. The Prophet (ppuh) remarked: "Uthman is the first man of my Ummah (nation) to migrate with his family for God's sake." While he was in Abyssinia, he was informed that the Quraish had embraced Islam and he returned to Makkah hurriedly, only to find, however, that he had been misinformed.

Uthman is given the title Dhun-nurain (The man with Two Lights)

Uthman migrated a second time with other Muslims from Makkah to Madinah. He had been unable to take part in the battle of Badr, the first battle of Islam against the unbelievers of Makkah, because his wife Ruqayyah had been seriously ill and she passed away before the Muslims returned from Badr, following the victory. Uthman was disheartened at having been unable to participate

in the battle, but the Prophet gave him glad tidings that he would be awarded as if he had taken part and then the Prophet offered his next youngest daughter, Umm Kulthum, to Uthman in marriage, and he was given the epithet of 'The man with two lights'.

Services to Islam

Uthman participated in almost all other battles against the non-believers in which the Prophet took part, excepting the battle of Badr. He served Islam by all means at his disposal and was from the earliest days one of the most prominent in the cause. About six years after the emigration to Madinah, at the time of the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Prophet sent him to Makkah to negotiate with the noblemen of the Quraish. Uthman proceeded to Makkah and on the outskirts of the city he was met by Aban ibn Sa'id who extended to him his protection for the duration of time that it would take him to convey his message. Uthman approached the noblemen of Quraish and handed over the Prophet's message. They suggested to him that he might circumambulate the Sanctuary if he wished, but he declined saying: "I shall never do so until the Prophet of God has done so himself." He continued to insist that the Muslims had come to Makkah simply in order to visit the shrine and to glorify it and to perform the religious duty of pilgrimage. He pointed out that the Muslims had brought their sacrificial animals and pleaded that if they were allowed to sacrifice them, they would return in peace. The Quraish replied, that they had already sworn defiantly that Mohammed would not be allowed to enter Makkah that year. The negotiations lasted a long time during which, Uthman was forced to stay in Makkah. While he was there on this mission, the Muslims

were informed that he had been murdered by the unbelievers of Makkah, however it was an untrue ruse aimed at perturbing the Muslim community. Hearing the news, the Prophet sought a pledge from the Muslims to fight the unbelievers in revenge for his murder. This pledge was made when the Prophet placed his left hand representing Uthman's hand, into his own right hand, and was known as the pledge of Radwan.

The Muhajirin from Makkah had great difficulty in finding drinking water when they arrived in Madinah. Uthman bought a well, named 'Bi'r i Rumah', from a Jew for twenty thousand Dirhams, for the Muslims to use freely. This was the first ever trust made in the history of Islam, and for this noble act the Prophet gave Uthman glad tidings of Paradise.

As the numbers of the Muslims increased, the Prophet's Mosque became insufficient to accommodate the blossoming population. Uthman responded to the Prophet's request and purchased land so that it could be extended. It was Uthman too, who bore the cost of all the expenses of equipping the third Islamic army on the expedition to Tabuk, which the Prophet headed with about 10,000 men. He also donated one thousand camels, fifty thousand horses and one thousand Dinars to support the rest of the army. At this the Prophet remarked, "Nothing will do any harm to Uthman from this day on, no matter what he does."

Uthman was one of the scribes of the Revelations and used to write other documents such as letters and messages for the Prophet. He attended the election of Abu Bakr as Caliph and was a member of the Shura Council occupying a prominent position in the affairs of the Islamic State from its earliest days.

CHAPTER TWO

Caliphate

(Khilafah)

Umar had appointed a panel of six men to select a new Caliph from among themselves before he died. He instructed the panel to make their selection within three days and to place their choice before the Muslim people for their approval. The panel consisted of Uthman, Ali, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, Talha, Zubair and Abd Al Rahman ibn Auf.

After numerous lengthy meetings the panel was unable to reach a unanimous decision, then Abd Al Rahman ibn Auf proposed that one name be withdrawn to resolve the matter. Receiving no response to this, he withdrew his own name. The remaining members agreed that he could make the decision. He then consulted with each member individually, except with Talha who was not present in Madinah, and Uthman proposed Ali's name while Ali proposed Uthman's. Zubair and Sa'd were in favour of Uthman and after more consultations with other Companion, Abd Al Rahman delivered his decision in favour of Uthman on the morning of the fourth day.

Assembling at the Prophet's Mosque, Abd Al Rahman first gave his pledge of loyalty to Uthman and was then followed by all the Muslims. Thus, Uthman was installed as the Third Caliph of Islam. When Talha returned to Madinah, Uthman offered that he be the Caliph, since he had been nominated for the post, but Talha de-

clined saying: "How could I object to your being the Caliph when all the Muslims have unanimously approved your instatement." And Talha immediately pledged his loyalty to Uthman.

The Amalgamation of Syria, Jordan and Palestine

In the time of Umar, Mu'awiyah ibn abi Sufyan, had been the governor of Damascus which controlled a large part of Syria. Uthman amalgamated the three provinces of Syria, Palestine and Jordan into one, and appointed Mu'awiyah as the Wali (governor) of the whole. Later in Umar's reign, Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantium died in Constantinople in the year 641 C.E. and his son, Constans became Emperor. After a period of some confusion, the Byzantine Empire was by now reduced to Antalya (present day Turkey) with its capital Constantinople, Asia Minor and some of the East European States.

The Romans still looked covetously at regions conquered by the Muslims, especially Syria and Alexandria in Egypt. After the death of Umar they once again mustered a great army and incited the people of these regions to rebel against the Muslim government.

Roman Invasion of Alexandria

A rebellion ensued in Alexandria in the year 25 H. (645 C.E.) and in 26 H, the Roman army invaded the city and took control of it after battling with the Muslims. Hearing the news, Uthman ordered Amr ibn al As to put down the rebellion and to repel the Roman invasion. Amr launched a counter attack upon the city and

successfully repelled the Roman forces out, returning control of the port to the Muslims.

Governorship of Egypt

In Umar's time there had been no absolute governor in Egypt, the powers of the governor were divided between Amr ibn al As, as commander in chief of the forces and, Abd Allah ibn Sarah who was in charge of the Revenue. However, Amr had more authority in matters of administration. In the year 27 H. a dispute arose between Amr and Abd Allah which was brought to Uthman's attention, upon his investigation, it was found that Amr had been in the wrong, and so Uthman recalled him to Madinah, installing Abd Allah as fully fledged governor of Egypt, and Amr reluctantly returned. The amount of revenue which had been raised from Egypt in taxes during Amr's time had been two million Dinars annually, however, when Abd Allah took charge it increased to four million.

Control of Asia Minor and Cyprus

The Byzantine Emperor Constans II, tried to take control of Syria and ordered his army to march on the Muslims. Perceiving a Roman invasion, Mu'awiyah led an army to Asia Minor, where the Romans had assembled. A battle took place at the city of Amuria and the Romans were defeated, soon after this he conquered a vast part of Asia Minor as well. Following these victories Mu'awiyah turned his attention to the Mediterranean. The island of Cyprus was strategically important from the point of defence. He sought and gained Uthman's approval to launch a sea war. In the year 28 H. a naval force was established for the first time in the history of Islam,

and Mu'awiyah despatched a fleet of 500 ships under the command of Abd Allah ibn Qays Harthi. The Island of Cyprus was taken after some hostilities and the inhabitants of the island agreed to pay the same tribute to the Muslims, as they had formerly paid the Romans. By the year 33 H. Mu'awiyah had also conquered the great fort of Antalya (present day Anatolia). He attacked the capital of the Roman Empire, Constantinople (present day Istanbul) but did not achieve a conquest.

Governorship of Iraq

Iraq had been governed in Umar's time by Sa'd, the governor of Kufa, but Umar recalled him to Madinah following some minor complaint. however, as he lay upon his death bed, Umar expressed his wish that Sa'd be reinstated as governor of Iraq and accordingly, Uthman re-appointed Sa'd to his former post. In the year 26 H. a dispute arose between Sa'd and Ibn Mas'ud who was the Treasury officer at Kufa. Ibn Mas'ud complained to Uthman, who discovered upon his enquiry into the matter that Sa'd had been in the wrong. Once again Sa'd was recalled and Walid ibn Uqbah was appointed as the new governor. Later in the year 30 H. Walid was accused of drinking alcohol for which he was not only dismissed from his post but received 40 lashes of the whip in accordance with Islamic Law. Uthman then appointed Sa'd ibn al As as the governor of Kufa until, in the year 34 H. certain elements plotted against the governor and when Uthman received a number of complaints against him, he replaced him with Abu Musa Ash'ari as governor.

Control of Azerbaijan and Armenia

After the death of Umar, a rebellion arose the year 26 H. in the

provinces of Azerbaijan and Armenia which had been conquered during his life time. Uthman ordered Walid ibn Uqbah who was the governor of Kufa at that time, to put down the rebellion. He despatched Islamic forces and retook the territory seized by the rebels.

At the same time Mu'awiyah sent an army to Armenia to confront the Romans, the Islamic army was under the command of Habib ibn Muslimah. He overthrew some fortresses but the Roman Emperor Constans II sent in a massive army of some 80,000 men to face the Muslims. At this, Mu'awiyah wrote to Uthman seeking reinforcements. Uthman ordered Walid ibn Uqbah, who was returning from Azerbaijan after taking it from the rebels, to join forces with Mu'awiyah. He immediately sent an army of eight thousand men under the command of Salman ibn Rabi'ah to Armenia. The two armies defeated the Romans and conquered the entire region of Armenia. They also conquered some parts of Asia Minor, including Aran and Garjustan. By the end of the year 26 H, the whole of the Caucuses came under the fold of Islam.

Control of Iran and Afghanistan

The governor of Basrah had administrative control of Iran, Abu Musa Ash'ari had the post since Umar's death but the people of Basrah wrongly accused him of partiality for the Quraish and, complained to Uthman against him. Uthman recalled him to Madinah and appointed Abd Allah ibn Omair as governor of Basrah in his place.

The entire Persian Empire was conquered during the time of Umar and the Persian Emperor, Yezdgird had fled to Balkh in Afghanistan. After Umar's death, the exiled Emperor sought to in-

stigate a rebellion against the Islamic rule in the border region of the Empire. In order to put down this uprising, Uthman appointed UbaidAllah ibn Ma'mar, but he did not succeed and was killed in battle. Following this, Uthman asked Abd Allah ibn Omair, the newly appointed governor, to take over the assignment. He successfully crushed the rebellion and conquered further parts of the region including, Hisraf, Gazna, Herat and Kabul. He also overcame Balkh and thus, the conquest of the whole of Afghanistan was achieved. He went on to take over parts of Samarkand, Tashkent, Sajestan, Arghiyan and Turkmenistan.

Conquest of Khurasan and Tabrastan

In the year 30 H. Sa'd ibn As marched on Khurasan with an army comprising many prominent figures, among them were Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Abd Allah ibn Abbas, and Abd Allah ibn Omair who had returned from an expedition to North Africa. At the same time Abd Allah ibn Omair, the governor of Basrah, marched out in that direction. However, Sa'd ibn As conquered a number of places including Tabrastan and Jarjan, before Abd Allah ibn Omair reached the destination.

In 31 H, Abd Allah ibn Omair again set out upon hearing the news of the rebellion, he subsequently conquered the remaining region of Khurasan. Meanwhile, Yezdgird, the exiled Persian Emperor, reached the north of Turkmenistan and tried to assemble an army but, he was defeated by the Muslims at Sistan and fled once again. At this, one of the Turkish chiefs of Naizak Khan invited him, but on his way there, he rested overnight in a village and while he slept someone killed him for his rich garments and money. Thus, was the demise of the last Persian Emperor.

Conquest of North Africa

It was essential for Egypt's continuing security to oust the Romans from North Africa. Nearby Tripoli, the capital of Libya, was a Roman stronghold. During the time of Umar, Amr ibn al As had made inroads into the coastal regions of North Africa but the interior remained unconquered. When Abd Allah ibn Sarah was appointed as governor of Egypt, he sought permission from Uthman to penetrate deeper into North Africa, he obtained the Caliph's permission and in the year 27 H, he set out with an army to conquer the Byzantine fortress of Tripoli. Uthman also despatched a contingent from Madinah to reinforce Abd Allah's army, which comprised of Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Abd Allah ibn Umar, Abd Allah ibn Zubair, Abd Allah ibn Amr ibn al As and Abd Al Rahman ibn Abi Bakr. After putting up a fight, the inhabitants of Tripoli agreed to enter into a settlement and promised to pay an annual Jizya (Indemnity tax) the equivalent of two and half million Dinars.

Following the conquest of Tripoli, Abd Allah ibn Sarah encircled his armies around Tripoli and close to the city of Yaquba, he confronted the massive Byzantine army which was under the command of a famous General named Jarjir. The battle commenced and the Byzantine commander promised a reward of one hundred thousand Dinars and the hand of his beautiful daughter to anyone who brought him the head of the Muslim commander, Abd Allah ibn Sarah. Hearing this, Abd Allah ibn Zubair asked Abd Allah ibn Sarah to announce the reward of one hundred thousand Dinars and the hand of the Byzantine Commander's daughter to anyone who brought him the Commander's head. The reward was announced and the same day, the Commander was killed, but no one came to

claim the reward. However, the princess recognised the man who had slain her father as none other than Abd Allah ibn Zubair, she married him and he was also awarded one hundred thousand Dinars. This victory cleared the way for the Muslims to advance into North Africa and before long, they had captured Tunisia and Morocco as well as a region of Algeria.

The Romans sought to retake Alexandria and in the year 31 H. Constantine sent a fleet of 500 ships to invade the port city. The Muslims prepared to repel the enemy. Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria, ordered his fleet to set sail to take the Romans on, in battle. Abd Allah ibn Sarah advanced with his fleet and confronted the Romans in mid sea. This was the first sizable naval battle in Islamic history. Although the Muslims were not experienced in sea warfare, they did not have difficulty repelling the enemy. The retreating Roman forces took refuge in the island of Sicily and the Muslims returned to Alexandria Victorious.

With the conquest of North Africa complete, Uthman gave orders for an expedition to Spain. He appointed Abd Allah ibn Nafai' as commander of the Muslim army, under the commander in chief Abd Allah ibn Sarah, the governor of Egypt. Abd Allah ibn Nafai' conquered a part of Spain but soon returned without completing his mission. Spain was later conquered by Tarik ibn Ziyad in the year 92 H. (711 C.E.) The name given to the rock of Gibraltar is derived from his name - Jebal Al Tarik which means literally, when translated from Arabic, 'The rock of Tarik'.

In retrospect, when we review the conquests made during the caliphate of Uthman, we observe that the Muslims conquered a number of new regions including Cyprus, Antalya and Asia Minor

in the West, Afghanistan, Samarkand, Tashkent, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kharasan and Tabrastan in the East as well as Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco in North Africa and Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Yemen and all the Gulf and last but not least, Arabia. The Muslims ruled over a vast part of Asia and Africa and brought all these countries under one flag, the Islamic State was far more mighty than any of the past Empires of Rome or Persia. The Religion of Islam also prevailed in Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia) and in some parts of East and Central Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

Conspiracies Against the Caliphate

The early period of Uthman's caliphate was relatively peaceful, during this time the Muslims gained many victories and the Caliphate was extended to a vast area of the known world. However, the later term of Uthman's reign was marred by violent civil war which ultimately resulted, in the murder of the Caliph himself. Uthman was a gentle and kindhearted man and the dissenting elements among the Muslims saw in these qualities an opportunity to create discord. Previously, Umar's stern hand had dealt swiftly against the practice of any non-Islamic custom, which had prevailed in the courts of the Persian and Roman Empires. But Uthman, due to his lenient nature, sometimes overlooked the shortcomings and faults in his governors and officers of the various provinces, although he himself strictly adhered to the way of the Prophet and the previous two Caliphs. His compassion encouraged the provincial governors to behave insolently and as a result unrest grew in the capitals of the provinces until it finally engulfed the entire Islamic State.

The enemies of Islam saw in this discord an ideal opportunity to work against Islam and the Muslims, and they began by initiating false rumours. One who took a leading role in the dissemination of such rumours was Abd Allah ibn Saba, a wily Yemenite Jew who, together with his clique, had declared his Islam only for self interest with the intent of destroying peace in the Islamic State. He falsified much untrue dogma and began to propagate it. Among the

untruths he declared was, that every prophet left a 'Wasi' (administrator) who was his relative. For instance, he claimed that the Prophet Moses had left Haroun as his Wasi and thus, the Prophet Mohammed must too have left a Wasi, who was Ali. Being the Prophet's Wasi, Ali was the only rightful man to be the Caliph. He claimed that the Caliphates of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman were unlawful and that the only way to redress matters was to remove Uthman, the existing Caliph. Abd Allah ibn Saba went on to declare that it was strange for Muslims to believe that Jesus would descend from heaven to follow Islam and to fight with the Muslims against the unbelievers in the end of time, and not to believe that the Prophet Mohammed would come back, as he considered the Prophet Mohammed superior to the Prophet Jesus.

He began to interpret the Qur'an wrongly and to distort its meaning to coincide with his claims, he preached his false self invented beliefs secretly and selected the main headquarters of Muslim military power, Kufa, Basrah, Syria and Egypt as centres for his activities. He recruited a number of newly reverted Muslims who had not become firm in their knowledge of the Religion, as well as some Muslims who had grievances against the various governors.

He first visited Madinah to assess the internal condition of the capital, although he put on a pretense of great piety, he did not gather many followers from the city. He went next to Basrah and began to preach his beliefs and to incite the people against the Muslim officers. At that time, Abd Allah ibn Omair was the Governor, hearing about his activities he summoned him and held an investigation. Having taken fright at the inquisition, Abd Allah ibn

Saba fled Basrah leaving his followers under the supervision of Hakin ibn Hublah who was a staunch opponent of the Governor.

Abd Allah ibn Saba then moved to Kufa and found in it a more amenable climate for his evil activities. Again he pretended to be pious and because of this show of devoutness, a number of simple Muslims were taken in by his ploy and he set about propagating his beliefs. The Governor of Kufa, Sa'd ibn al As was informed about him and he summoned him and warned him against preaching his fabrications and the damage he aimed to cause the Muslim community. Consequently, he left Kufa as well, but not before installing Ashtar as his deputy there with instructions for the mission to be carried on secretly. He then went on to Damascus but failed in enticing anyone to follow him due to the strict control of Mu'awiyah.

Finally, he found his way to Egypt where the governor, Abd Allah ibn Sarah, was fully occupied with the battle against the Roman forces in North Africa, and thus paid little attention to Saba's activities. He continued to communicate with his followers in Basrah, Kufa and other places from Egypt, and directed them to create disorder and rivalry among the Muslim populations.

Most of his followers were only pretending to be Muslims. they used various techniques to increase their strength and made a great show of piety and worship. They incited people to forge complaints against the Governors, officers and the Caliph. An uprising began against the officers in which they were condemned as irreligious, non adherent Muslims. They sent forged letters out from place to place claiming in them that there was unrest, in the place the letter had come from. Such letters were usually sent to the followers of Saba who then read them out to as many people as possible. These

letters falsely claimed to have the support of Ali, Talha and Zubair in their mission and alleged that they disliked the Caliph Uthman. Thus, various people in places all over the Islamic State were wrongly led to believe that there was general and widespread unrest in the State and that the most notable of the Companions wished to remove the Caliph from his office.

These Sabites also worked throughout the State against the governors of the various provinces, they were the main reason for their removal, as they had been instrumental in the case of the removal of Abu Musa Ash'ari from the Governorship of Basrah, when he opposed their presence there. They spread rumours about Walid ibn Uqbah, the governor of Kufa, falsely accused him of drinking alcohol and provided a false witness against him, which resulted in his suffering the punishment of 40 lashes of the whip at the order of the Caliph. Then, when he was punished, they accused the Caliph of punishing innocent Muslims.

When Abd Allah ibn Omair was appointed as the Governor of Basrah to replace Abu Musa Ash'ari they incited the public to turn against him and against the Caliph saying, that he had only been given the post because he was related to the Caliph. On one hand they incited the people against the governors and on the other, they accused the Caliph if he acted upon their grievances.

Uthman's Defence

Taking advantage of the long time rivalry between the families of the Banu Hashim of Quraish, to which the Prophet belonged, and the Banu Umayyah, to which Uthman belonged, the Sabites incited the Banu Hashim against the Banu Umayyah, in the person of

Uthman, by telling them that he was removing the most notable officers from their posts in order to make the Umayyad more powerful and he was thus, giving preference to his own family.

They also alleged that Uthman was overly extravagant and gave money to his relatives from the Public Treasury, which they accused him of squandering away. This allegation was utterly untrue. Uthman was one of the wealthiest merchants in Arabia and he had contributed liberally to the cause of Islam without hesitation. He spent his money on the poor and needy as well as his relatives and never took anything wrongfully from the Public Treasury. Nor did he even accept any allowance from it for his services as Caliph, as he was entitled to do. Uthman delivered a number of speeches clarifying his position against these false charges and offered satisfactory explanations for all the lies hurled against him. Once, he promised to give one fifth of the booty of Tripoli, which was the State share, to Abd Allah ibn Sarah, the governor of Egypt, for his invaluable services and the bravery he had displayed at the battle that took place between the Muslims and the Roman forces in North Africa, however, the public opinion went against this idea, and he had to ask Abd Allah to return it.

Another allegation leveled by the followers of Saba against Uthman was, that he had burnt copies of the Qur'an. In fact Uthman had sent copies of the Qur'an which had been transcribed by Zaid ibn Thabit on the orders of Abu Bakr, to various places in the State with the instructions that the governors of each province burn any copies of the Qur'an which did not correspond with the original copies transcribed by Zaid ibn Thabit. This was done in order to preserve the integrity of the Qur'an in its written form, as there ex-

isted at that time, a number of copies of the Qur'an in which the order of the chapters differed from the order of Revelation. Other copies were incomplete and some variations had arisen in pronunciation of certain words due to differences in handwriting. Therefore, Uthman had merely sought to ensure faithful copies of the original. This was, and still is considered to be one of the greatest services Uthman did for Islam, for which he has been given the title 'The Compiler of the Qur'an' although it was first compiled by Abu Bakr on the insistence of Umar.

At this time, there lived a well known and pious Companion by the name of Abu Dharr Ghifari, who had been a Companion of the Prophet in his lifetime. Abu Dharr always kept himself away from the world and its riches and he loathed the saving of money. He held the view that the funds held in the Public Treasury should be spent for the welfare of the Muslims as soon as it was amassed. In Syria, he began to publicise his opinion and a number of people followed him. Seeing this Mu'awiyah wrote to Uthman, who immediately recalled Abu Dharr to Madinah, Abu Dharr then retired to a village called Rabdhah, which was near Madinah. Abd Allah ibn Saba attempted to gain favour with Abu Dharr, supposing he would support him, but Abu Dharr rebuked ibn Saba telling him that his beliefs were contrary to Islam and he aimed to disunite the Muslims.

The followers of Ibn Saba began to accuse Uthman of forcing Abu Dharr to live in a village outside Madinah and accused him of ill treatment of other Companions, among them Ammar ibn Yasir and Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud. However, all these accusations were proved untrue.

Yet another allegation levelled against Uthman by the Sabites was, that he permitted Hakem ibn As, who had been cursed by the Prophet and placed in exile by him, to return to Madinah, and that he had also appointed his son Marwan ibn Hakem as his chief secretary. This decision of Uthman's was not popular with the prominent Companions or with the Muslim public, and may not have been a wise one. Marwan became the focus of the insurgent's incitement, and it was they who ultimately assassinated the Caliph.

Uthman summons a Conference of Governors

When the unrest grew more serious and spread to all parts of the State, the news began to pour into Madinah. The leading Companions asked Uthman to take measures against the Sabites, so he called for a conference of governors in Madinah in the year 34 H. It was just after Hajj and all the governors attended the meeting. Uthman enquired from them about the growing unrest in the State, and they informed him that it was due to trouble makers who wanted to overthrow the government. There was a general consensus, that such people must be punished and their leaders put to the sword, however, Uthman disliked the suggestion and told them that without just cause, he could not order the shedding of blood. Instead, he sent a mission of four envoys, Mohammed ibn Muslimah, Usamah ibn Zaid, Ammar ibn Yasir and Abd Allah ibn Umar to tour the provinces.

When the governor's conference was over Mu'awiyah suggested that he should leave Madinah and should pass some time in Da-

mascus, but Uthman said: "I would not leave Madinah even if the people would kill me." Then Mu'awiyah asked Uthman to allow him to send an army to Madinah for his protection but Uthman did not agree to that either.

The four envoys toured the provinces and spoke with the people, three of them returned to Madinah and reported to Uthman that the conditions were normal. The fourth member of the mission did not return, he went to Egypt where Abd Allah ibn Saba and his followers persuaded him to join them.

Ibn Saba seeks support

Ibn Saba was in search of important men to have as friends, who could influence the Muslims. He won over three figures of note, Ammar ibn Yasir, Mohammed ibn Abi Hodzeifa and Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr. Mohammed ibn Abi Hodzeifa was an orphan who had been brought up by Uthman, together with other orphans. He had always hankered after an important post but Uthman did not consider him capable of such responsibility. So he left Madinah for Egypt and finally joined up with Ibn Saba. Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr was in debt and the creditor had complained to the Caliph, who had decided the case in favour of the creditor, as a result, Mohammed left Madinah and went to Egypt where he too joined Ibn Saba.

The Sabites plotted to cause general uprising when the governors were away to attend the conference. However, their plan was not to be brought to fruition. After Egypt, Kufa was the main centre of the Sabites, the hooligans of Kufa, attempted to put the plan into action and prevented the governor from entering the city when

he returned from the conference. They demanded that Musa Ash'ari be appointed as governor in place of Sa'd ibn As. Their request was granted and Uthman sent Musa Ash'ari to Kufa.

They mapped out another plot and decided that their ring leaders should meet in Madinah. This plan was to serve a dual purpose. Firstly, they wanted to study the situation for future courses of action and secondly, they wanted to demonstrate to the public that they had put their grievances to the Caliph but he had ignored them.

Accordingly, three delegations came to Madinah, one from Egypt, one from Kufa and one from Basrah. Uthman was informed of their plan but he accepted it quietly. When the Sabites entered Madinah, some Companions suggested to Uthman to have them killed, but Uthman told them that without sufficient legal grounds, no man can be executed and that he would work to resolve the problem, he told them: "I prefer to be kind towards them and if kindness fails to work then I would rather sacrifice myself for God's sake."

Uthman listened to the delegates and delivered a lengthy address in which he answered all the charges they had leveled against him. An extract of his speech follows:

" I have been accused of loving my kinsmen and of being unduly kind to them. It is not a sin to love one's relatives but I have never been unjust to other people because of my love to my relatives. Whatever I give them is from my own pocket. I have never spent anything on my relatives and kinsmen from public funds..."

"It has been said that I have appointed comparatively young

men as officers. I did it only because I found them abler for the cause of Islam. Nobody could deny their honesty and the work they rendered for the cause of Islam and Muslims. The Prophet's appointment of Usamah as the commander of the army is proof that youth is no disqualification."

"...It has been alleged that I gave the whole booty of North Africa as a reward to the governor of Egypt. It is true but, when I learnt of the public opinion against it, I took the money back from the governor and deposited it in the Public Treasury...."

"It is said that I have reserved the public pastures for my personal use. I swear by God that I have never done so. Only the animals which are the property of the Public Treasury graze in public pastures. All of you know that when I was entrusted with this office I had more animals than anyone in the whole of Arabia, but now I have only two camels, that are to serve me at the time of Hajj. So how could I reserve the public pastures for my personal use?.."

"People accuse me of sending copies of the Qur'an. I have only sent copies of the Qur'an which were compiled by the Companions who wrote it down under the direct supervision of the Prophet...."

It is said that I called Hakam, who was put in exile by the Prophet, to Madinah. Actually, the Prophet exiled him from Makkah to Taif, then the Prophet allowed him to live in Madinah at my request. I only put into action the permission granted to me by the Prophet.."

Thus, Uthman countered satisfactorily all the allegations levelled against him by the Sabites. At the end of his address he

asked the audience: "Tell me if what I have said is correct or not?"

The aim of these seditious trouble makers was to create mischief. They returned to their places and instead of recounting the truth they told the people that the Caliph was not ready to set things right. They then planned to send strong contingents of their followers from places such as Basrah, Kufa and Egypt to the forthcoming Hajj. The groups were to disguise themselves as pilgrims but their aim was to enter Madinah and decide the matter with the sword. Even though Uthman knew of this plan in advance, he did not permit the use of force against them. He remained determined to overcome his enemies with love and compassion and by peaceful means.

CHAPTER FOUR

Martyrdom of Uthman

The insurgents entered Madinah in the year 35 H. (656 C.E.) as the time of Hajj drew near. They had started coming in small groups and during the month of Shawwal, began to put their plans into action. All together about three thousand Sabites came, one thousand from each place, Basrah, Kufa and Egypt.. The groups from Basrah stayed at Dhi Khashab, those from Kufa stayed at A'was while the Egyptians, stayed at Dhi Murwah. All three places are in close proximity to Madinah. They were unanimous in one aspect of their cause, which was the removal of Uthman, however, they had not agreed as to who should replace him. The Egyptians wanted to install Ali but the Kufites preferred Zubair, while the Basrites were in favour of Talha. The Egyptians came to Ali and asked him to accept the Caliphate. Ali replied: "The Prophet has told us that the parties of Dhi Khashab, Dhi Murwah and A'was are cursed, every pious Muslim knows this. I cannot cooperate with you, go back to where you came from."

The insurgents made the same request to Zubair who gave the same reply. Then they approached Talha who also refused. When Uthman heard of this, he sent some of the leading Companions including Ali to them, Ali assured the insurgents that their complaints would be dealt with. They forwarded certain demands including the dismissal of the governor of Egypt and appointment of Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr as the new governor. Uthman acceeded to their requests without question and then, he gave a short speech

in which he said: "By God, for the cause of truth. I am ready even to obey a slave. I promise to fulfill your demands." As he spoke, tears rolled down his face and the audience wept too.

Ali again assured the insurgents, and they appeared to be content when they started to return back. Everyone in Madinah thought the trouble had been resolved.

However, it was not to be, a few days later the Muslims were surprised to hear shouts of 'revenge, revenge!' in the streets of Madinah. Ali, hearing the fracas, came out to enquire about the matter. The insurgents showed him a letter bearing the seal of the Caliph and signed by Marwan ibn Hakam, the chief secretary of the Caliph. The letter was on route to the governor of Egypt by a special messenger when they had intercepted it. It read: "Kill Mohammed ibn Abu Bakr." instead of reading, Accept Mohammed ibn Abu Bakr.

Ali tried to pacify them but they would not listen to him and went straight to Uthman saying: "We do not want Uthman to be Caliph, God has made his blood lawful to us. You should also help us." Ali said: "By God, I have nothing to do with you. It seems that you have devised a plot and are trying to carry it out."

Uthman took a solemn oath that he had not written the letter nor knew anything about it, but the insurgents did not believe him and said: "Whether you wrote it or not, you are unfit to be Caliph and you must abdicate." They threatened to kill him at which point Uthman replied: "I do not fear death, but I do not wish to shed Muslim blood."

When Ali saw that the insurgents were now in control and Uth-

man, did not intend to use force against them, he left for Ahjar, a place a few miles away from Madinah, because he felt that his position was becoming difficult as the insurgents intended to involve him in the matter.

Uthman's House Beseiged

The insurgents then demanded that Uthman give up the Caliphate voluntarily. He rejected their demand saying: "I cannot remove the robe of honour which God Almighty has bestowed upon me." At this, the insurgents laid siege to his house and did not permit him to come out except to offer prayer in the Mosque. But later on, they did not allow him to come out at all, the siege went on for forty days, during the final days they prevented any water from reaching him. Some bravehearted Muslim youths, among them, Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Mohammed ibn Talha and Abd Allah ibn Zubair were guarding the gate of his house so that no one would dare to enter the house. Together with Uthman, inside was his wife, Nailah and Marwan ibn Hakam. He did not permit anyone to fight with the insurgents although a fight did take place between the insurgents and Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn and Marwan when they prevented Umm al Mu'minin Habibah to send in meals for Uthman. Al-Hasan received minor injuries but Marwan was seriously hurt. The insurgents avoided confrontation with Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn because of their fear of the Hashmites. During the siege, Uthman sent Abd Allah ibn Abbas to Makkah to lead the Hajj and to inform the people about the insurgents, he also sent messengers to the governors of the provinces.

As the situation became more difficult, Uthman was his usual

kindness and soft nature. He addressed the insurgents several times from his roof top and reminded them of his family ties with the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), and of the services he had rendered Islam. but to no avail.

The dissenters feared that when the Hajj ended a number of supporters would come to Madinah to protect the Caliph. They decided therefore to assassinate him without further delay. Wishing to avoid a confrontation with the Hashmites who were guarding the house, they climbed in through a back window to the room where Uthman was reciting the Qur'an. It was Friday 17th ZulHijjah, 35 H. (17 July 656 C.E.)

One of the insurgents struck Uthman's head with an axe while another struck him with a sword. His wife, Nailah tried to shied her husband, but she received several wounds and had her fingers cut off. History records that the leader of the assassins was Mohammed ibn Abu Bakr, he seized Uthman's beard and pulled it, at this Uthman remarked: "O my dear nephew if your father were alive you would not have done this." Uthman's remarks shook his senses and he withdrew from the assassination. After inflicting severe injuries upon Uthman, one of the insurgents, an Egyptian named Amr ibn Hamq. severed the Caliphs head from his body.

The martyrdom of Uthman had been foretold by the Prophet. once. when the Prophet, Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman went up the mountain of Uhud near Madinah, the mountain began to quiver from the presence of those who stood upon it and the Prophet tapped it with his foot and said: "Keep steady, O Uhud, for there stands upon you a prophet, a Siddiq and two martyrs."

It is explained that Abu Bakr was the Siddiq (friend), while

Umar and Uthman were the martyrs prophesied by the Prophet.

News of Uthman's cruel assassination spread quickly and left the Muslims reeling in shock. Ali received the news as he was returning from Ahjar on his way to see Uthman. Stunned at the news he said: "O God, You know, I am free from any blame." He then rebuked his sons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn and others who had stood guard at the gate of Uthman's house for not being more vigilant.

Repercussions

Having done away with the Caliph the insurgents virtually took over control of Madinah. They looted the Public Treasury while the Madinites were fearful to come out of their houses. The body of the Caliph remained unburied for two days, finally some Muslims succeeded in entering the house and carried out the burial service. Only seventeen Muslims attended his funeral prayers. Uthman was 82 years old at the time of his death and had held the office of Caliph for 12 years, his words of self sacrifice: "I would rather sacrifice myself for God's sake." will be remembered for ever in Islam.

Uthman's assassination was unparalleled in Islamic history and it had far reaching consequences. Hodzeifa ibn al-Yaman remarked upon hearing of his killing: "Woe! the assassination of Uthman will divide the Muslims until the Day of Resurrection, they will never be united again." These words proved to be true enough, soon after, civil war broke out and continued on until the tragedy of Karbala, when Al-Husayn was murdered.

Hearing news of Uthman's assassination, Abd Allah ibn Abbas

a prominent narrator of Hadith of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) and a great scholar of the Islamic nation, remarked: "God might have stoned us as He stoned the people of Lot if the majority of the Muslims had supported the assassination of Uthman."

Abd Allah ibn Salam, who was the first Rabbi to revert to Islam, and became one of the great Companions of the Prophet, said: "By God, the power of the Arabs has been diminished."

Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, said: "Uthman has been most cruelly assassinated, his record of deeds is shining like a well washed cloth."

Upon receiving the news of Uthman's murder, Abu Hurairah and Zaid ibn Thabit began to weep uncontrollably for a very long time. The shirt of Uthman, which was still covered with his blood, and the severed fingers of his wife, Nailah, were taken to Mu'awiyah the Governor of Syria in Damascus, where they were displayed to the Muslim population, cries of: "Revenge, revenge!" rang out.

The assassination of Uthman was the impetus for civil war and a more epoche making event, than almost any other in Islamic history. With Uthman's death the political unity of Islam came to an end. Before long, Islam's religious unity was also disrupted. Islamic society entered upon a period punctuated with schism and civil strife, which has prevailed until today. The Unity of Islam which had been achieved by the first two Caliphs was destroyed and conflict resulted between the Muslims.

A number of inter-Muslim civil wars and battles ensued. The

system of centralised government formed by Umar and developed by Uthman was shattered, and a number of factions arose of which, the most disquieting was, the Kharijite.

Summary of Úthman's Achievements for Islam

During the reign of Uthman the territories of the Islamic State were immensely extended, although the conquests in his time were not as many in number as they had been in the time of Umar. However, they were not without importance, and the period of his Caliphate constituted a glorious period in the history of Islam. He ruled over a vast part of the then known world, from Kabul in Afghanistan to Morocco in North West Africa and, dealt a crushing blow to any rebellion.

The Naval force was developed in Uthman's reign and many victories were gained in sea warfare for the first time. Most notably was the 'Great Victory' When the Muslims crushed the navy of the Byzantine Empire comprising some 500 ships. After the Muslim conquest of the North African territories and their gaining full control over the Mediterranean, the once mighty power of the Byzantine and Roman Empire collapsed. Islam was at its zenith during the era of Uthman.

Compilation of the Qur'an

Of the most notable services rendered to Islam by Uthman during his Caliphate, the safeguarding of the manuscripts of the Qur'an against discrepancy or change, must rank above all else. Many

hundreds of thousands of non-Arabs had reverted to Islam after the Muslim conquests. Their mother tongue was not Arabic and Hodzeifa ibn al-Yaman, one of the prominent Companions who had gone for 'Jihad' during that time, noticed many differences in the manner of recitation of the Qur'an. The Syrians recited in a way which differed from the Kufis, while the Kufis differed from the Basrites and so on. These differences were due to the way Arabic was written.

On his return to Madinah, Hodzeifa reported what he had seen to the Caliph and suggested that the Madinese codex should be regarded as authentic because it was written down and compiled during the time of Abu Bakr and kept by Hafsah, the wife of the Prophet. Uthman asked Zaid ibn Thabit, who had written the text down during the time of Abu Bakr, to make copies of the Qur'an in Hafsah's care, and together with the assistance of other Companions, including Abd Allah ibn Zubair and Sa'd ibn As, he completed the work. Then, Uthman ordered that all other copies should be burnt and destroyed throughout the Islamic State in order to preserve the integrity of the original.

Enlargement of the Prophet's Mosque

When the mosque of the Prophet became too small for the increasing Muslim population, Uthman purchased a large plot of land in the vicinity of the Mosque in order to extend it. At first, some people who resided in the nearby houses refused to vacate them even when they were offered attractive compensation. For four years the extension of the Mosque was held up, one day, Uthman delivered a stirring speech at the Friday Prayers and the people fi-

nally agreed to donate their houses and move out. The Mosque was extended in the year 29 H. This was the first extension to be made to the Prophet's Mosque.

Uthman spent much of his time and energy preaching to prisoners of war, many of them reverted to Islam due to his efforts. He also taught Islamic Law to the Muslims. Once, he himself demonstrated the correct method of making wudu (ablution) before a large gathering of Muslims. He paid special attention to supply the various places in the State with teachers of Islamic Law, the Qur'an and Hadith. People were appointed to ensure the rows of worshippers were straight at congregational prayers, especially on Fridays when the congregation in the mosques was more numerous.

Construction of Infrastructure

Uthman ordered the construction of new buildings for offices and bridges in various places in the Islamic State. He pioneered the construction of guest houses and rest houses for travellers in the cities and, highways all over the State. He ensured that the roads were kept in good condition and that they were secure from highway robbers and bandits. He provided water to travellers by having wells dug at intervals along the routes. Because of the risk of flood, particularly to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, Uthman ordered the construction of an embankment all around that side of the city, it was known as the Embankment of Mahroz.

Scholastic Achievements

Uthman had a most beautiful handwriting and the Prophet appointed him to be one of the scribes who wrote down the Revela-

tions of the Qur'an. His style of script was well recognised among the Companions and the fluency of his writing made him an effective communicator. His letters and orders can still be seen and admired today for their clarity and style.

Uthman was a great scholar of the Qur'an which he committed to memory. He was well versed in the chronology of Revelation of the chapters and verses of the Qur'an, and was considered an authority in this regard. He was one of the few Companions who excelled in deriving law from the verses of the Qur'an. Although he was not a great Jurist as Umar and Ali had been, he was nevertheless well qualified in this respect. His veredicts and judgments were soundly made and he was considered an authority on the laws of the Hajj. Even Umar used to ask Uthman about matters concerning the Hajj, in his time.

Piety

Uthman was a most pious Companion and a man of high ethics while being at the same time, one of the most modest of all the Companions. Once, the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) was sitting with some of his Companions and the shin of his leg was uncovered. Someone told the Prophet that Uthman was about to arrive and the Prophet immediately covered his leg saying, "Even the angels have regard for the modesty of Uthman."

Uthman followed the Sunnah of the Prophet most adroitly, when someone once asked him, why he smiled after making wudu, he replied that he had seen the Prophet smiling after making wudu, so he had smiled to follow him.

Uthman was such a Godfearing man that, whenever the trials of the grave were described to him, tears would roll down his face until his beard was wet. Sometimes he wept at seeing a corpse or grave from fear of God, he used to say: "The grave is the first stage of the stages of the Hereafter. If a person is successful there, he will be successful on the Day of Judgment, if a person faces difficulty in the grave, the other stages will also be difficult for him."

He often used to help with household chores, even though he was one of the wealthiest people in Arabia. He would not awaken his servant to have him assist him when he rose to perform 'Tahajjud' prayers. He was one of the most soft spoken of people, if anyone spoke to him in a harsh tone he always replied gently. Once when he was delivering his Khutbah (sermon) at Friday Prayers, a man shouted out during his speech: "O Uthman, repent for God's sake and keep away from wrongdoing." He immediately turned his face towards the Qiblah (niche for the direction of prayer) and exclaimed: "O God, I am the first to repent before You and to turn towards You."

Uthman never took any allowance from the Public Treasury for his services as Caliph, although Umar used to receive 5,000 Dirhams a year, Uthman contributed 60,000 Dirhams over the 12 years of his office.

Examples of his generosity are multifold, he was the most generous of all the wealthy Companions and never hesitated to spend all his money in the cause of Islam. His house was one of the largest in Madinah, adjacent to the Mosque of the Prophet, and he established a library at the rear of his property for the Muslims' education.

Uthman's Administration

Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) observed the same principles in his government as had been laid down by Umar. The main features of his administration are summarised as follows:

Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) maintained the Shura Council of Advisors in the same way it had been run by the first two Caliphs. The principle members of his Shura were Ali, Zubair and Talha. General councils for consultations were also called from time to time. All prominent Companions, governors and prominent officers were present at the General Council conference held in the year 34 H, which was assembled to consider the internal condition of the Islamic State.

Government of the Provinces

Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) divided the State into provinces according to a new plan. Before he was Caliph, there were three provinces in the region of Syria, being Syria, Palestine and Jordan. Uthman combined all three into one, putting it under the control of a single Governor, Mu'awiyah. This was necessary and important from the view of defence. Uthman separated the post of governor from the post of commander of the armed forces in the various provinces. Separate officers were appointed for both posts under the direct control of the Caliph.

Uthman did condone the misbehavior or mistakes of his officers in spite of his gentle hearted nature. When complaints were reported to him regarding officials in the provinces he would immediately instigate an investigation into the matter.

On Fridays, he would always come to the Mosque long before the Adhan (call to prayer), to listen and deal with the Muslim's complaints and grievances. At the time of Hajj he would publicly hear any complaint in regard to officers or governors.

The officers who were in posts of governorship at the time of Uthman's assassination were as follows:

Makkah - Abd Allah ibn Hadrami

Taif - Qasim ibn Rabi'ah Thaqafi

Yemen - Ya'la ibn Munabbah

Syria - Mu'awiyah

Administrators under the control of the governor of Syria were as follows:

Jordan - Abu al-A'war al Salimi

Homs - Abd al Rahman ibn Khalid ibn Walid who was also administrator of Jazirah

Palestine -Alqamah ibn Hakim

Egypt -Abd Allah ibn Sa'd, who was also in charge of North African territories, each of which had its own administrative officer, under the governors of Egypt, Tripoli, Algeria and Morocco.

Basrah -Abd Allah ibn Omair, who was also in charge of all the territories in Eastern Persia, each of which had its own administrative office under the governors of Basrah, Balkh, Kabul, Herat, Samarkand, Sajistan, Arghiyan and Turkmenistan

Kufa -Abu Musa Ash'ari, who was also in charge of all the territories in Western Persia, each of which had its own administrative officer under the governors of Kufa, Khurasan, Tabrastan, Azerbaijan and Isfahan

Qansirin -Habib ibn Muslimah Fahri, who was also in charge of Armenia and Antalya.

Zaid ibn Thabit was the Qadi of Madinah and Uqbah ibn Amir was the Treasury Officer in Madinah.

The Armed Forces

Uthman retained the same formula in the armed forces as had been established by his predecessors. During his rule there was a notable increase in the number of armed men. He not only increased the military power of the Islamic State but unified the various military units, into a well coordinated force. For example, when Mu'awiyahh needed re-inforcements to confront the Romans, the armies in Iran and Armenia were immediately moved to Syria. Uthman established a number of new barracks at Tripoli, Cyprus, Armenia and Tabrastan. Besides the central barracks, there were also a number of small cantonments, as well, in various outlying areas.

Uthman arranged the breeding and raising of horses and camels, large pasture areas were reserved for military animals. The pasture at Rabdhah near Madinah was ten miles long and about nine miles wide. Another pasture at Darbah also near Madinah, was six miles long. He constructed ponds near the pastures and housing for the caretakers. To meet the increasing needs of the armed forces the numbers of camels and horses were constantly increasing, the pas-

ture at Darbah held 40,000 camels alone, while the total number of animals kept by the Islamic State was beyond numeration.

Uthman took particular care of military personnel and raised their allowances as well as introducing new forms of allowance. He separated the civil departments from the military departments.

One of the most notable features in the development of military power during the reign of Uthman was, the establishment of a naval force. The Muslim navy was proficient and well equipped and constantly expanded in his time.

The Public Treasury and Revenue

The revenue of the Public Tressury also greatly increased under Uthman. Egypt alone brought in two million Dinars under Umar, but during Uthman's reign this increased to four million a year. He used the entire amount of Public Funds for the general welfare of the public, increasing allowances for the poor and needy, as well as arranging free distribution of foodstuffs and cooked meals for impoverished and disabled persons. The concept of 'meals on wheels', meals delivered to the homes of the disabled, a quite new phenomenon to be seen in some western societies, was first invented by Uthman, as was the disability allowance. A major part of the revenue was used in the construction of bridges, roads, barrages and mosques. He also fixed salaries for the Mue'zzins (those who call the Adhan) for the first time in Islamic history.

Uthman showed exemplary tolerance for the insurgents. By not responding with force, he set the first example of the highest form of ethical rule in human civilization, the rule of Islam.

The Fourth Caliph

Al Imam

ALI IBN ABI TALIB

(May Allah be pleased with him)

Caliphate period:- 35 H. to 40 H. [656 to 661 C.E.]

The Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib said:

"Your souls are precious, and can only be equal to the price of Paradise, therefore sell them only at that price."

"Whoever struggles against the truth is soon cut down by it."

CHAPTER ONE

Ancestry

Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was born some thirty years after the birth of the Prophet. He came from the most respectable family of Quraish, the family of the Prophet, the Banu Hashim, and he was a cousin of the Prophet. He was the first Hashimite to be born of two Hashimite parents and so, carried the pure blood of the noble family. His father was Abu Talib ibn Abd Al-Muttalib ibn Hashim ibn Abdu Manaf, his mother was Fatimah bint Asad ibn Hashim ibn Abdu Manaf. It is reported that at his bi-rth his mother chose for him the name of Haidairah, after her father Asad, Haidairah is another word for Asad, which means lion. But his father changed his name to Ali and he was known by that name ever after.

Ali was the youngest son of his parents, his elder brothers were Ja'far, Uqail and Talib. Between each of the brothers was ten years.

Early Life

It was reported that Uqail was his father's favourite, and when Quraish was struck with a drought, the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him) appealed to his uncles, Al-Abbas and Hamzah, to help their brother Abu Talib during the crisis. They offered Abu Talib to care for his children and he said: "Leave me Uqail and take the rest ." Al-Abbas chose to take care of Talib and Hamzah, chose to care for Jaf'ar, and the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon

him) took Ali and gave him every kindness and affection in his early childhood, which influenced him for the rest of his life. Thus, he was accustomed to truth, justice and wisdom from an early age and grew up more advanced than his years. He possessed a unique genius of judgment, understanding and eloquence.

Ali was born inside the Ka'bah and God honoured his face, in that he never prostrated himself to any of the idols which used to stand in the Ka'bah at that time. It was as if his birth heralded the beginning of a new era for the Ka'bah and for worship within it. Although he was actually born before Islam, he was virtually born into it, because from the time he opened his eyes to the life, he opened them upon Islam and knew nothing of idol worship.

He grew up in the household of the Prophet, from whence the call for Islam was issued. He learned devotion from the prayers of the Prophet and his noble wife before he knew it from his own parents. The bond of kinship between him and the Prophet was stronger than the bonds between him and his immediate family, and the love between him and the Prophet was more firmly rooted than any other. He was a cousin to the Prophet, who brought him up in his house and he enjoyed the Prophet's kindness and affection. Strangers loved the Prophet and preferred him to their parents and families, so there is little wonder that a relative such as Ali, loved him so intensely.

Historians differ as to his exact age when the Prophet received his mission, it is given as seven to sixteen years, but he was the first to become Muslim from early childhood. When the Prophet began to preach his message openly, he invited all his family members to a feast and announced his mission before them, no one paid

attention except Ali, who stood up and said: "Although my eyes are sore, my legs are thin and I am the youngest of all those present here I will stand beside you, O Messenger of God." Hearing this all the leaders of Quraish laughed out loud, but Ali proved his word.

The Prophet (ppuh) loved him immensely. the night when he was migrating to Madinah, his house was surrounded by tribesmen intending to kill him. They were prepared to kill anyone who came out of the house. The Prophet (ppuh) asked Ali to sleep in his bed while he took flight for Madinah at night, Ali unhesitatingly jumped into his bed in compliance with the Prophet's request.

The Prophet (ppuh) was renowned as the most trustworthy of men and although they did not accept his mission the people of Makkah continued to keep their trusts of cash and gold in his safe-keeping. It was Ali whom the Prophet trusted to return the possessions to their owners when he left for Madinah, thereafter, Ali migrated to Madinah to join the Prophet.

Ali was extremely close to the Prophet and the relationship was further enhanced when he married the Prophet's most beloved daughter Fatimah. Thus, he had the additional honour of being the father of the Prophet's progeny through his sons, from Fatimah, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn. The two children were the most beloved of the Prophet's grandchildren.

He had three sons from his wife Fatimah, Al Hasan, Al Husayn and Muhsin, who died in infancy, and two daughters Zainab and Umm Kalthum.

After the death of Fatimah, he married the following wives at different times: Umm al Banin bint Hizam, who bore him Abbas,

Jafar, Abd Allah and Uthman.

Laila bint Mas'ud, who gave birth to Ubaid Allah and Abu Bakr.

Asma bint Umais, who was the mother of Yahya and Mohammed asghar.

Sahba bint Rabi'a, who bore him Umar and Ruqqayah.

Amamah bint Abil As, the daughter of Zainab, daughter of the Prophet, who bore him Mohammed Aswat.

Khaulah bint Ja'far, who gave birth to his son Mohammed ibn Ali.

Umm Sa'id, who bore him Umm al Hasan and Ramlah Kubra.

Mahyah bint Umm al Qais, who gave birth to a daughter who died in infancy.

With the emigration to Madinah, the Prophet laid down the foundation of a new civilisation, this was expressed very succinctly in a report by Ali ibn Abu Talib when he asked the Prophet of God concerning his Sunnah, and the latter replied: "Wisdom is my capital, reason the force of my Religion, love my foundation, longing my vehicle, the remembrance of God my constant pleasure, trust my treasure, mourning my companion, knowledge my arm, patience my robe, contentment my booty, poverty my pride, asceticism my profession, conviction my strength, truthfulness my intercessor, obedience my argument, holy war my ethics, and prayer my supreme pleasure."

Thus, did the teachings of the Prophet have a profound effect upon him, and he tried to emulate the Messenger of God to the highest degree.

Ali's Bravery

When the Prophet left Madinah on the expedition of Tabuk in the year 9 H, he placed Ali in charge of the city. At this, some of the hypocrites remarked that the Prophet did not like Ali, but the Prophet responded: "You are in the same position in relation to me as Aaron was in relation to Moses, the only difference being there is no prophet after me."

Ali was well known for his bravery, he participated in almost all the battles against the unbelievers during the time of the Prophet, the stories of his courage are set in the annals of history.

In the first battle of Islam at Badr, Ali carried the flag of the Islamic army. When three famous Quraishi fighters challenged the Muslims, Ali along with Hamzah and Abu Ubaidah, accepted the challenge and Ali killed his opponent Walid, with one thrust of the sword, slicing him in two, and then went on to help Abu Ubaidah to kill the following Quraishi warrior. At the battle of Uhud, when the bearer of the Islamic standard was martyred, it was Ali who raised it up, when seeing this, one of the unbelievers, Abu Sa'd challenged him. Ali attacked him and he fell to the ground naked, at which Ali left him in his piteous state. It was Ali too, who drew around the Prophet with other Companions, in the Battle of Uhud, when the archers deserted their posts in quest of booty, and in the chaos which ensued when almost all took flight, Ali, whom God had guided and protected, stood steadfast beside the Messenger of God.

In the battle of the Trench, a famous Arabian warrior, Amr ibn Abd Al-Wudd, challenged the Muslims after jumping with his

horse across the trench. Ali offered himself to the challenge, but Amr refused saying: "I hate to kill the likes of you, your father was a companion of mine, so go back, you are only a youth." But Ali insisted on going to confront him. The Prophet (ppuh) gave Ali his famous sword 'Dhulfiqar' and put a turban on his head before he went to fight with Amr, a cloud of dust soon hid them from view and then the sound of Ali's voice could be heard magnified, and they knew that Amr was dead. Then they saw Amr with his head severed from his body.

The Epithet of Asad Allah

(The Lion of God)

Because of his legendary bravery, Ali was popularly known as 'Asad Allah" (The Lion of God).

The Muslims had tried to conquer the Jewish fortress of Qumus during the battle of Khaibar against the Jews, but had not been successful at first. The Prophet (ppuh) told them: "I will give the command and the standard tomorrow to such a brave person who loves God and His Prophet and whom God and His Prophet love."

Everyone hoped to be that person and the next morning, they were somewhat surprised when the Prophet nominated Ali, who was sick at the time and his eyes were sore. The Prophet (ppuh) rubbed his finger, wet with his saliva, over Ali's eyes and they were cured immediately. Then he gave him the standard and advised him: "First of all, invite them to Islam, even if one man is guided towards Islam through you, it will be better than all the goodness of this life."

In accord with the advice, the Prophet had given him, Ali invited the Jews to Islam, but instead of accepting the invitation they sent their commander Marhab, a great warrior of Arabia and he challenged Ali to fight. Ali accepted the challenge and slew him in one attack cutting Marhab's body in two with his famous sword.

Ali displayed exceptional bravery at every battle in which he participated. He earned a reputation for unrivaled courage as one of the greatest warriors of Islam. However, he was not only an expert at fighting but was a great scholar as well, the Prophet said of him: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate." He was one of the greatest Jurists among the Companions and the Prophet appointed him as the Qadi (judge) of Yemen during his life time. His mastery of Arabic and writing were as effective as his eloquent speech.

The first Hajj of Islam took place in the year 9 H. Abu Bakr was appointed as the leader of the pilgrims. After he left Madinah, a Revelation came to the Prophet which decreed that the treaty with the unbelievers had to be dissolved, to which effect they were to be given four month's notice:

"God and His Messenger declare that the believers are free of any obligation towards those of the unbelievers with whom you had made treaties.

So journey freely in the land for four months, and know that you cannot frustrate the will of God and that, God degrades the unbelievers.

A proclamation from God and His Messenger, to all people on the day of the Greater pilgrimage, "God and His Messenger are free of the treaty obligations made with the unbelievers, but if you

(unbelievers) repent, that will be better for you, but if you turn away, know that you cannot frustrate the will of God". And warn the unbelievers of a severe chastisement-

Except those unbelievers with whom you made treaties and who did not violate these in the least, nor give help to anyone against you. so fulfill your treaties with such people according to the terms of the treaty, surely God loves the pious- (Surah 9 verses 1-4)

The announcement was made on the great day of Hajj and the Prophet asked Ali to carry the message of God on his behalf. He gave Ali his own she-camel, Qaswa, on which Ali rode to Makkah to proclaim the message before the gathering pilgrims.

Ever since Ali ibn Abu Talib recited the opening verses of the above Surah of "Al Taubah" to the Muslims and polytheists, who came to perform the pilgrimage under the leadership of Abu Bakr, and ever since the announcement that, from then on no polytheist would enter Paradise or perform the pilgrimage, no naked man would circumambulate the Sacred House, and that, whoever had a covenant with the Prophet of God (prayers and peace be upon him) would have his covenant honoured until its expiration, the unbelievers of the Arabian Peninsula realised that their idol worship would have to come to an end. They awoke to the fact that unless they themselves put an end to it, they would eventually have to take up arms against God and His Prophet. This situation applied particularly to the southern regions of the Peninsula, Yemen and Hadramaut, because Hijaz and all the territories of the north had already entered into Islam and stood under its protection.

In the south, polytheism and Christianity divided the land. Most polytheists announced their entry into God's Religion and sent their delegations to Madinah to proclaim it. The Prophet (ppuh), accord-

ed these delegations the best of welcomes, thereby encouraging the entrance of others into the fold and confirming the new reverts in their faith. The Prophet's restitution to each prince his princedom and, to each leader his leadership made all these new reverts extremely keen to retain their new status. As for the Jews and Christians, the following verses from Surah "Al Taubah" read by Ali on that momentous occasion, were made known to them:

"Fight those who do not believe in God and the Last Day, who do not forbid what God and His Messenger have forbidden, and do not adopt the True Religion (Islam) from among the people of earlier Scripture, until they pay the Jizyah (indemnity tax) with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued. And the Jews said, "Uzair if the son of God". And the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of God". Such are the unfounded things they utter with their mouths, following in the footsteps of the unbelievers before them. God strike them dead! How they are perverted! They have taken the Messiah, son of Mary, and their Rabbis and their priests as lords other than God, but they were commanded to worship only One God, there is not God but He, Glory be to Him, He is above and free from all that they associate with Him. They desire to extinguish God's Light with their mouths, but God ordains that His Light will be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest it. God is the One Who sent His Messenger with the Guidance and the Religion of Truth (Islam) to make it prevail over all religion, even though the unbelievers may detest it. O you who believe! Most surely many of the Priests and Rabbis devour the wealth of the people in falsehood, and hinder them from the Way of God, and those who hoard up gold and silver, and do not spend it in the cause of God, announce to them a

painful chastisement. On the Day when it shall be heated in the Fire of Hell, and with it, their foreheads, and their bodies, and their backs shall be branded, "This is what you treasured for yourselves, so taste the evil of what you were treasuring".

(Surah 9 verses 29-35)

It was precisely this call, which was proclaimed by Ali at the pilgrimage, that brought in its trail the conversion of the southern Arabians.

The virtues of Ali are so innumerable, it would be difficult to recount all of them, on many occasions the Prophet prayed for him. When he sent Ali to Yemen in Ramadan of the year 10 H. he prayed for Ali: "O God, put truth on his tongue and enlighten his heart with guidance." Then the Prophet placed his turban upon Ali's head and handed him his standard. Ali was met with opposition and was attacked, although he was still of a tender age and commanding only a force of three hundred men, Ali vanquished them. They regrouped their forces and fought a second time, but again, Ali surrounded them and broke their resistance. Finally, they submitted and reverted to Islam in good faith.

On one occasion the Prophet said: "Only a hypocrite does not love Ali and a believer does not hate him."

According to a Hadith transmitted by Imam Ahmad, the Prophet said to Ali: "You resemble Jesus whom the Jews hated so much that they slandered his mother and, whom the Christians loved so much, that they placed him in a position not rightly his." Afterwards Ali said: "Two types of people will perish on my account, one who loves me so excessively that he praises me for what I do not possess, and one who hates me so much that he will be impelled by his hatred to slander me."

Ali's Love of the Prophet

The Prophet's death was a grievious shock to Ali, he had attended him day and night during his illness, and after the Prophet died, Ali washed his corpse in the garment he had died in, as each member of the Prophet's family had been instructed, they should allow be done, in a dream, each of them had had after they were in disagreement about his burial. Ali passed his hand over each part of the long woolen garment, saying: "Dearer to me than my father and mother, how excellent you are even in death."

After the death of the Prophet all the Companions pledged their allegiance to Abu Bakr, except Ali, who did so later due to the fact that he had taken an oath upon the Prophet's death that he would not engage in anything except prayer until he completed compiling the Qur'an. Ali gave his pledge of loyalty to Abu Bakr and assisted him throughout his Caliphate. He was very active in the cause of Islam during the time of Umar and gave his daughter Umm Kulthum in marriage to him. When Uthman was nominated for the Caliphate, Ali voted in his favour.

Ali was one of the most important and notable members of the Shura Council during the first three Caliphates and, was also a great Jurist of Madinah. He numbered among the panel of six who had to select the Caliph after Umar died. Uthman had great regard for him and consulted him in all matters. His sons were the main guards at Uthman's house when the rebels laid siege to it.

Ali could never have foreseen the shameful assassination of Uthman or ever imagined that it would happen. It came as a complete surprise to him, his two sons Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn had

stood guard at the gate of Uthman's house for forty days until the insurgents secretly climbed a back wall of the house and entered upon the Caliph as he recited the Qur'an. The killing of Uthman resulted in the insurgents taking almost complete control of the Capital for several days. The people of Madinah were too afraid to even come out from their houses and sat behind closed doors, for three days Madinah was without any government.

CHAPTER TWO

Caliphate
(Khilafah)

When afterwards the Egyptian insurgents, led by Ibn Saba, approached Ali asking him to be Caliph, he had declined the responsibility of this great office at first. But the insurgents pressed upon him to accept. In fact Ali had in mind to approach Talha and Zubair who had been nominated in the panel of six appointed by Umar to select a Caliph, and he wished to take the pledge of loyalty from either of the two. But finally, he decided to put the matter before the Muslim public in the Prophet's Mosque, as a result, the overwhelming majority of the Companions in Madinah considered Ali to be the most suitable person to be Caliph after Uthman. Thus, he agreed to take on the responsibility.

On 21st Dhul-Hijjah in the year 35 H. pledges of loyalty were sworn to Ali. First, the leading insurgents took their pledges at his hands, followed by the general public of Madinah. Talha and Zubair did not wish to give their pledges until the case of Uthman's assassination had been resolved. Beforehand, Ali had offered the office of Caliph to each of them, but they had declined in his favour. However, under the threats of the insurgents, they took their pledges of loyalty at Ali's hands on the condition that Ali would decide matters according to the Qur'an and Sunnah and would punish the guilty according to Islamic Law. Ali agreed to their conditions. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas said he would make his pledge when

all the Muslims had done so. Some Companions did not give the pledge to Ali, among them Mohammed ibn Muslimah, Usamah ibn Zaid, Hassan ibn Thabit, Ka'b ibn Malik, Abu Sa'id Khudri, Nu'man ibn Bashir, Zaid ibn Thabit, Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and Abd Allah ibn Salman. Most members of the Banu Umayyah, the family of Uthman, also declined. Some of these left for Syria.

However, the majority of Muslims in Madinah took pledge at Ali's hands. Ali was the most suitable and fittest person to be Caliph after Uthman. If some of the Companions did not take the pledge it was because of the political situation of the time, not because the majority considered him unacceptable. No one other than Mu'awiyah sought the Caliphate at that time. Ali had the support, not only of the insurgents, but of the Ansar and Muhajirin, and was undoubtedly the most popular figure of the time.

Disobedience of the Insurgents

On the third day of his office, Ali asked all the followers of Ibn Saba to leave Madinah and return to their regions. Some of them began to leave, but a party headed by Abd Allah ibn Saba did not obey the Caliph's order and pretended to be staying there as his friends. This was the first incident in Islamic history of disobedience to a Caliph in office. Their purpose in staying was to create mischief, as time would only prove soon enough.

Three major problems faced the new Caliph when he took power. Firstly, he had to establish peace in the State and to ameliorate the deteriorating political situation. Secondly, he needed to take action against the assassins of Uthman who had by now gone underground. Some of them had been among those who had asked Ali to

accept the office of Caliph, but neither he nor any of the Muslims perceived that at the time. It was to prove difficult to determine who the assassins were, as many who could recognise them, had already left Madinah. The Sabites, who were still in the city, would not speak the truth of the matter, all of them claimed that none of their party had ever wished to kill Uthman, but said that some evil persons whom they could not recognise had done so. The truth could only be found in a more peaceful atmosphere, but the situation which existed made it impossible, and it only went from bad to worse.

The third problem was, the attitude Ali should adopt towards those Companions who had not pledged their loyalty to him and, who continued to refuse to do so until he handed over the assassins or punished them according to Islamic Law. These demands were virtually impossible to fulfill in the prevailing situation.

Ali was an extremely straightforward man and he regarded the office of Caliph as an enormous trust. His aim was to establish peace in the State and to resolve the causes of discord. Notable Islamic Jurists agree that it is permissible for a Muslim ruler to delay a case of murder in order to first establish peace in an Islamic State. Ali, was therefore quite correct in his opinion to defer the question of the assassins until he had restored normality to the State. The majority of Muslims at the time agreed with him in this.

Attempt to locate the Assassins

After taking up office, Ali had attempted to ascertain the identity of the assassins. He summoned Marwan ibn Hakam, who had been Uthman's chief secretary and who was present in the house at

the time of his murder, but he had already left Madinah for Damascus together with members of the Banu Umayyad.

The sole witness other than Marwan, was Nailah, wife of Uthman, but she was a housewife who used to live under hijab in accordance with Islamic custom and so, she could not tell the names of the persons who had killed her husband, she could only describe the features of some of them. The only person she was able to name as having entered the house was Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr but, he had left before Uthman's killing. He had taken an oath that he was not Uthman's killer and that he had left the house as soon as Uthman had recognised him and said: "O my dear nephew if your father were alive you would not have done this." Nailah gave her evidence in favour of Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr and confirmed that he was not one of the assassins. In spite of his efforts, Ali was unable to determine who or where the killers were.

Ali Dismisses all Governors

It was Ali's considered opinion that Uthman's appointment of governors had been the root cause of the events which contributed to his murder. The governors had done too little to check the subversive activities of the insurgents in the various provinces. Consequently, Ali dismissed all the governors in the State who had been installed by Uthman. He was opposed in this matter by some of the Companions, notably, Mughirah ibn Shu'bah and Ibn Abbas. They advised him not to take such a drastic course of action, saying it would not be wise to dismiss the governors unless they first pledged loyalty to him. Ali did not heed their advice because he believed that expediency should not be the guiding factor. Mughirah

ibn Shu'bah was totally against Ali's proposed course of action and he left Madinah for Makkah.

Ali appointed Abd Allah ibn Abbas as governor of Yemen, Uthman ibn Hanif as governor of Basrah, Ammarah ibn Hissan of Kufa, and Qais as governor of Egypt. Sahl ibn Hanif was asked to take charge of the governorship of Syria from Mu'awiyah.

The new governors faced difficulties when they arrived to take charge of their posts, Egypt was one of the provinces in favour of Ali, but when the new governor, Qais, reached the country the public was divided into three groups. Some of them accepted him, others demanded that the assassins be punished first, and a third group, belonging to the Sabites and the insurgents, demanded that the assassins must not be punished in any way.

The same difficulty was faced by the newly appointed governor of Basrah. A group of people was in favour of the insurgents, while the other was against them. As the governor of Kufa was on his way, a spokesman came out to him and asked him to return to Madinah because, they did not wish to change their governor, Musa Ash'ari. So the prospective governor, Ammarah ibn Hissan retraced his steps to Madinah. The new governor of Yemen, Abd Allah ibn Abbas did not face any difficulty because Ya'la, the outcoming governor, had already left for Makkah before Ibn Abbas reached the country.

When Sahl ibn Hanif, the governor designated for Syria, reached Tabuk, Mu'awiyah's cavalry prevented him from proceeding any further and forced him back to Madinah. With Ali's selection as Caliph, the people of Syria and the surrounding region under Mu'awiyah, were content with the indulgent life style they had

been living during the reign of Uthman, due to his softness and lenency, which permitted the Umayyah to take the upper hand in the province. They now feared that Ali, being strict and strong-minded, would not permit this to continue. Thus, Kufa and Syria were the only two provinces to openly flout Ali's authority.

Mu'awiyah's Incitement and Demands

Mu'awiyah took a more circuitous course of action. Upon the arrival of Uthman's widow, Nailah, in Damascus with his blood stained shirt and her severed fingers. Mu'awiyah made the news public and the people of Syria were greatly perturbed. Mu'awiyah hung the shirt and the amputated fingers on the Mimber (pulpit) of the Mosque in Damascus, consequently the Muslims became enraged, this was the situation when Sahl ibn Hanif, the governor designate, was forced to return to Madinah as he reached Tabuk.

Ali sent a special messenger to Mu'awiyah but he detained the messenger, and did not reply for about three months, until he sent his own messenger to Ali, in Rabi'ul Awwal in the year 36 H. The messenger handed over the letter to the Caliph which was addressed: From Mu'awiyah to Ali and read: "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." The letter contained nothing else but blank paper. Ali understood this to be an insult to the office of the Caliphate. The messenger also told Ali that 50,000 sheikhs in Syria were bemoaning the death of Uthman and were determined to fight until the assassins were handed over to them. To this, Ali exclaimed: "O God! You know full well that I am free of any charge in Uthman's murder, I swear by God that the assassins have escaped."

The Sabites who had remained in Madinah on the pretence of being friends of Ali, tried to create another discord by attempting to kill the messenger, but Ali prevented it. However, exchanges of heated words took place between them and the messenger. Mu'awiyah's reply was a clear indication of his intentions. The matter was not to be settled without hostility. Therefore, Ali decided to prepare for the inevitable conflict. Ali's eldest son, Al-Hasan, was a man of rather passive temperament, he asked his father to give up the Caliphate and to abandon the idea of confrontation against Mu'awiyah. But Ali saw no other way of keeping the provinces under the control of the Islamic State.

This was the first time in the history of Islam that Muslims were preparing to put down an internal rebellion. Mu'awiyah's refusal to pledge loyalty to the Caliph was an open revolt against his authority and, firm steps needed to be taken to deal with it.

Aisha hears of the Assassination

While Ali was still occupied with the problem in Syria, another dilemma arose. Following the death of Uthman some members of his family went to Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, who was then in Makkah to perform the Hajj, and they informed her of the tragedy while she was on her way from Makkah to Madinah after the Hajj. upon hearing the news of Uthman's assassination, she returned to Makkah and appealed to the people there, to avenge the death of Uthman. Hundreds of people came out at her call, including the governor of Yemen, Ya'la ibn Mubabbah. Among the Banu Umayyads who joined Aishah in Makkah were Sa'd ibn As, Walid ibn Uqbah and Marwam ibn Hakam.

Meanwhile, Talha and Zubair demanded Ali to punish the assassins, he told them, "Please be patient, I will do my duty as soon as conditions allow." Talha and Zubair were not satisfied at this response and left Madinah for Makkah to join Aishah. They had not fully understood the delicacy of the situation in Madinah as the city was not yet free of the grip of the Sabites, and the general feeling against the Umayyads. Ali was anxious to restore peace first, so that the assassins could be found and brought to account.

In Makkah, Aishah prepared to march to Madinah at the head of about two thousand men with the intention of dealing with the assassins, Abd Allah ibn Zubair was also in Makkah and they asked him to join them, but he declined to do so. Aishah was about to march out to Madinah when proposals came to visit Basrah first. to rally more supporters and she changed her plans and headed for Basrah.

Aisha Goes to Basrah

While Aishah was en route to Basrah more people joined up with her and by the time she reached the city, three thousand men had rallied under her flag. The governor of Basrah, Uthman ibn Hanif, sent some men to ascertain the purpose of her arrival there. She and other Muslims, told them that they wanted to inform the people of their duty towards the slain Caliph so that proper action would be taken to punish the assassins. The governor's messenger asked Talha and Zubair for what reason they were breaking the pledge of loyalty to Ali. They replied that the pledge was taken from them at the point of a sword and that they would have kept the pledge if Ali had avenged Uthman's assassination.

The governor of Basrah decided not to permit them to enter the city until he summoned help from Ali. He called a public meeting and asked the people to stand against them. At the meeting, some people favoured the governor while some supported Aishah, Talha and Zubair. The supporters of Ali and the governor resolved to stand firm.

Aishah delivered a stirring speech to the Muslims, it was so impressive that half of the supporters of the governor left him and joined her. Seeing this, Aishah offered to settle the matter peacefully but some agents of the Sabites, primarily, Hakim ibn Hublah, interfered to prevent a peaceful settlement, by attacking Aishah's army.

The fight which took place, resolved nothing. Meanwhile, the governor received instructions from Ali to resist Aishah's army if they did not agree to pledge loyalty to him. Then, a furious battle took place in which Uthman ibn Hanif, the governor, was defeated and captured. Hakin in Hublah and some of his followers were killed and Basrah was occupied by Aishah and her supporters.

Ali Sets Off for Basrah

The capture of Basrah by Aishah made the situation very grave indeed. The Islamic State was teetering on the verge of civil war. Ali never wished to go into confrontation with fellow Muslims but, the internal situation at that time made war unavoidable.

The Caliph, therefore, postponed his march to Syria for the time being in order to set things right in Iraq and he decided to march on to Basrah. A number of the Ansar and other Companions were

against Ali leaving Madinah, and asked him to send his army instead. However, he resolved to leave and as he was going, Abd Allah ibn Salam took hold of his camel rein and said: "O Leader of the Believers, do not leave Madinah. If you leave now, you will never come back and the Capital will be changed." But he was determined to go ahead with his mission in spite of these pleas because of the gravity of the situation.

Some Companions remained neutral and did not join Ali even though he asked them to do so. Among these, were Abd Allah ibn Umair, Mohammed ibn Muslimah, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas and Usamah ibn Zaid.

Towards the end of Rabi'ul Awwal in the year 36 H. (Nov. 656) Ali set off for Basrah, Abd Allah ibn Saba and his followers accompanied him. Ali asked Abu Musa Ash'ari to despatch help but he received no response because Abu Musa dreaded a civil war. Therefore, Ali sent his eldest son, Al-Hasan, to Kufa where he addressed the people and pleaded for Ali. The people were stirred at his appeal and about nine thousand men marched out to join his father.

Attempts at Peaceful Negotiations

Ali assured all the people accompanying him that he would do his utmost to avoid blood shed and to set things right, in peace. On reaching Dhi Qar, a place near Basrah, Ali with his characteristic aversion to conflict, sent his cousin Abd Allah ibn Abbas and Qa'qa ibn Amr to make peaceful negotiation with Aishah, Talha and Zubair ,who were preparing a large force to confront Ali.

Ali's messengers assured Aishah, Talha and Zubair that Ali would avenge the murder of Uthman as soon as peace had been re-established in the State. Hearing this, they were satisfied and there was hope of a peaceful settlement.

But Abd Allah ibn Saba and his henchmen were in the army with Ali, and they determined that peace was not to prevail. They sent agents to Basrah to incite the Muslim population there by telling them, that if Ali entered Basrah he would enslave them and kill their youth, therefore the Basrites must take the offensive and fight.

Ali hoping for a peaceful settlement, marched towards Basrah to speak personally with Talha and Zubair. The two armies faced each other. Ali delivered his address to the Basrites in which he told them: "I am your brother; I will avenge Uthman's assassination." Talha, Zubair and the Basrites were content with what he had said. Ali also returned to his camp well pleased, giving strict orders to his men, not to fight in any case, whereupon he turned in prayer to God and offered devotion all thought the night.

But Ibn Saba and his clique had planned otherwise. In the darkness of night they launched a surprise attack on Aishah's army. Talha and Zubair were startled by the suddenness of it and said that Ali could not desist from shedding Muslim blood. Ali, on the other hand was shocked when he was informed by the Sabites that Talha and Zubair had taken them by surprise. He made similar remarks on the taking of Muslim blood as Talha and Zubair had made. The Sabite leaders behind this treacherous plan were, Ashtar Nakh'i ibn Sauda, Khalid ibn Muljam, Alba ibn Haitam and Shuraib ibn Aufa with Ibn Saba as the mastermind.

Hostilities Erupt

Before long, full scale war broke out and hundreds of Muslims fell on each side. Ali was grieved at the situation and he tried to stop the battle but it was in full thrust.

At dawn, the troops of Aishah informed her of the situation and suggested that she mount her camel in Hijab so that the situation might ease. But it had the opposite effect, the Basrites thought that Aishah had come to fight them in the field. During the battle Ali reminded Talha and Zubair of the words of the Prophet: "One day you will fight mistakenly." They remembered these words and left the battlefield, but as Talha was leaving a shower of arrows rained upon him and he was killed.

The fighting did not cease and Ali ordered one of his men to cut the hind legs of the camel in which Aishah was carried in her Howdagh. The order was carried out and the camel fell on its forelegs, Aishah was taken out of her Howdagh with due respect and the battle came to an end in favour of Ali. Aishah was then sent to Madinah escorted by her brother, Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr.

Tens of thousands of Muslims had lost their lives in this battle from both sides, Ali was deeply moved at the loss of Muslim blood and Zubair, who had already left the field after remembering the Prophet's warning, went to Makkah. On his way there, he stopped in a valley to perform the prayer and was slain by a man named Amr ibn Jarmoz. Ali came to know of this and rebuked the murderer saying: "I have seen him fight for the Prophet several times, may the murderer have news of Hell Fire".

The people of Basrah gave their pledge of loyalty to Ali after the battle and he appointed Abd Allah ibn Abbas as the governor of the city. He gave a general amnesty to all those who fought against him, including Marwan ibn Hakam and other persons of the Banu Umayyah family. The address, which Ali gave at the Mosque in Basrah before taking their oaths of fealty, moved the Muslims immensely and they were convinced that he was a just and noble Caliph.

The Capital Moves to Kufa

Ali was very much grieved on seeing the disrespect with which the insurgents had treated the Haram in Madinah when they had laid siege to the late Caliph's house. He wanted to change the capital to spare Madinah any future political disturbance. After staying for a few days in Basrah, Ali went to Kufa and received a warm welcome there. He rallied more supporters at Kufa and thought it a more suitable place to be the Capital of his Caliphate. So, in the year 36 H. he declared the transfer of the capital from Madinah to Kufa.

Final Attempts for Peace with Mu'awiyah

Ali now turned his attention towards Mu'awiyah. Ali was by now in control of the entire Islamic State with the exception of Syria. Ali, being a peace minded person, preferred a peaceful settlement with Mu'awiyah, he therefore, wrote him a letter asking him to take the pledge of loyalty at his hand in the interests of Islam and for the unity of the Nation. But Mu'awiyah again, demanded him to first avenge Uthman's murder.

The display of Uthman's blood stained shirt and the severed fingers of his wife was still going on in the Mosque in Damascus. Powerful Syrians had rallied around Mu'awiyah and Ali was still unable to put down the insurgents. When Mu'awiyah's messenger came to Ali to place a demand before him to hand over the assassins, 10,000 men of Ali's army declared in one voice: "We are all the assassins of Uthman." Ali then said to the messenger, Muslimah "You can see for yourself the situation, I am unable to find the assassin." But Mu'awiyah was determined not to give up his demand, which was more a tactic he had taken to preserve his position as governor, and not out of any sincerity to Uthman's memory. Ali finding no other way, was compelled to declare war against him.

The Battle of Siffin

The situation of dissent obliged Ali to march out against Syria. At first, there was not much response to Ali's call, but when he explained the position to the Muslims, a large army gathered around him and 50,000 Muslims came out under his banner to fight the Syrians. When Mu'awiyah came to know of Ali's army, he too proceeded with a large force and settled in a prime position in the field. Ali, encamped at Siffin, with Mu'awiyah on the opposite side.

Ali's intention had been to pursue a peaceful settlement, he wished to avoid the shedding of Muslim blood at all costs, he tried to send a delegation of three men on a mission of peace to Ma'awiyah but he again, made his insincere demand that the assassins of Uthman must be slain before any compromise could be

reached. and this time he demanded this as a wali (next of kin) of Uthman. Ali rejected his demand on the grounds that he was not able to locate the assassins and it might take some time, so the pledge of loyalty must be given without preconditions.

In the month of Dhul Hijjah in the year 36 H, Ali ordered his troops to take up their positions. But there seemed to be an unwillingness to fight on both sides. Muslims were facing Muslims, however, the fighting began with single handed combat followed by light encounters of single battalions. The entire month of Dhul Hijjah passed without a major battle. When the month of Muharrum dawned, Ali and Mu'awiyah made a truce for that month. During that time he had an opportunity to renew the peace talks which had broken off a month earlier. Ali then sent another mission to Mu'awiyah led by Adi ibn Hatim Tai. But this time, Mu'awiyah took it as a threat and refused to recognise Ali as the Caliph unless, he avenged Uthman's murder. In this way the last attempt at peace bore no fruit.

On the evening of the last day of Muharrum, in the year 37 H. Ali ordered his army to attack the Syrian forces because they had been given ample time to reconsider. The war began the next morning and Ali gave strict orders that no person should be killed if he left the field or ran away and women and the elderly were not to be killed or harassed in any way.

The battle began on Tuesday 1st Safar 37 H. On the first day, a battalion of Ali's army led by, Ushtar fought the Syrians led by, Habib ibn Muslimah. On the second day, another battalion led by, Hashim ibn Utbah from Ali's side fought the Syrians led by, Abul A'war Salama. On the third day, the battalion from Ali's side was

led by, Ammar ibn Yasir and the Syrians were led by. Amr ibn As. During the ensuing battle Ammar ibn Yasir was martyred and the battle ended indecisively that day. The martyrdom of Ammar however, proved that Ali was in the right because of the Hadith in which the Prophet said: "Ammar ibn Yasir will be killed by a group of rebels." Since Ammar was fighting on Ali's side and was killed by the army of Mu'awiyah, Ali was proven to be in the right and his opponents to be the rebels.

For seven more days the battle continued, a new battalion was used each day from each side under a new commander, by the eighth day the entire army of Ali clashed with that of Mu'awiyah and a ferocious battle was fought which again, brought no resolution. The battle went on all night, and at one point, Ali reached Mu'awiyah's tent and challenged him personally to a duel instead of shedding more Muslim blood. But Mu'awiyah rejected the offer because Ali was well known in all Arabia as a great warrior.

When it appeared to Mu'awiyah that he was about to lose the battle, he consulted with Amr ibn As, the conqueror of Egypt, who was with him. He advised that, Ali's troops would stop fighting if they saw copies of the Qur'an on the spears. He ordered his troops to attach copies of the Qur'an to their lances and Ali recognised it as a clever move, however, many of his men stopped fighting thus, giving Mu'awiyah a tactical advantage.

The Despatch of Envoys

Ali sent his envoy to Mu'awiyah to ascertain what they meant by making the Qur'an a judge. Mu'awiyah told him that he wanted an arbitration through judges, one from each side, and that both

parties should abide by the decision of the judges. Ali accepted this and suggested Abd Allah ibn Abbas as his arbitrator, but some of the Sabites, seeking as ever to create discord among the Muslims, rejected it on the grounds that he was related to Ali. They proposed the name of Musa Ash'ari. Ali accepted their proposal and he was appointed as the arbitrator. Mu'awiyah appointed Amr ibn As on his side.

It was decided to hold the talks at a place called Dumat-al-Jandal, which lay between Syria and Iraq. Both judges with eight hundred men would go there to finalise their talks by the month of Ramadan, and to announce their decision to the people. And on the 13th Safar in the year 37 H, a temporary agreement was signed between Ali and Mu'awiyah. The two armies then left for their homes leaving behind some 90,000 dead in the field of Siffin, this number totaled the number of Muslim casualties in all the battles previously waged against the enemies of Islam.

Ali, who was on the point of winning the battle over Mu'awiyah, marched back from Siffin with a deep sense of bereavement for the enormous loss of Muslim lives. Never before in the history of Islam had the loss of Muslim blood been so great. Ali had paid a heavy price, it bore heavily on his spirit because he had never wanted to take up arms, preferring a peaceful solution from the outset.

Agreement of Arbitration

Ali announced the agreement before his troops, which were made up of the various tribes, and two brothers of the tribe of Anza stood up and opposed the appointment of the arbitrator between the

two parties on the grounds that, the only Judge could be the Qur'an. Other people also followed suit and good many of them were against arbitration, saying it was contrary to the spirit of Islam. Some of them asked Ali to discard the agreement, but he said: "I did not want any agreement at that stage but you forced me into it, now that I have given my word of honour you want me to go back on it. I will never do so." At this, Ali's followers split into two parties, one stood for the agreement while the other insisted arbitration was un-Islamic.

The second group, which opposed arbitration were known as the Kharijites. By the time Ali returned to Kufa their number had risen to 12,000. They distanced themselves from the other Muslims, instead they made a separate camp at Harorah and appointed Seith ibn Rab'i as their commander in chief and Abd Allah ibn Kawa as their Imam to lead the prayers. They made the following proclamation:

"Fealty is only to God, and He alone is to be obeyed. To propagate good and forbid evil, according to the Qur'an, is our foremost duty. There exists neither a Caliph nor a Ruler, both Ali and Mu'awiyah are in error, Mu'awiyah is in error because he did not accept Ali, while Ali is in error because he agreed on arbitration. Upon our taking power we intend to establish a social order based on the Book of God."

Upon his return to Kufa, Ali sent Abd Allah to the Khawarij to try to set things straight, but instead of returning to the fold they began a lengthy dispute. Ali himself went to reason with them, he gave them all assurances that the arbitration would only be accepted if it were based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah, and after a great

deal of persuasion the Khawarij rejoined the rest of the Muslims, although only temporarily.

Outcome of Arbitration

The two arbitrators thought over the matter for six months, then met at the frontier town of Dumat-al-Jandal in Sha'ban in the year 37 H. (Jan. 658). Each of them had four hundred men with him. Shuraih ibn Hani was in command of the men from Ali's side together with the Imam Abd Allah ibn Abbas. The four hundred men from Mu'awiyah's side were under the command of Surjil ibn Samah. Also present were some Companions such as Abd Allah ibn Umar, Abd Allah ibn Zubair and Sa'd ibn Waqqas who took a neutral position.

The Judge appointed by Mu'awiyah, Amr ibn As, was a well known diplomat in Arabia, while the Judge from Ali's side was an ordinary Muslim, unacquainted with diplomacy. At first, a discussion between the two parties was commenced, a scribe recorded the points of agreement during the talks and after a lengthy debate they reached the following agreement:

"Ali and Mu'awiyah both withdrew their right to the Caliphate. The Muslims should appoint a third person as their Caliph."

They did not, however, agree upon the choice of the successor to be approved in replacement of Ali. After the agreement, Amr ibn As asked Abu Musa Ash'ari to proclaim it publicly by announcing it in the Mosque before the assembly. Thus, Abu Musa announced,

"We have agreed that neither Ali nor Mu'awiyah are considered fit to be Caliph. You may elect any other man you think suitable."

The statement not only showed the split of opinions between the arbitrators, but was clearly one sided, because it meant that Ali would lose his office while Mu'awiyah would retain his.

When the assembled Muslims heard the proclamation there was uproar, the rest of the arbitration was mere confusion. The outcome was, that the whole process had been futile. with hopes of peace evaporated, both parties left the place in disgust. The acceptance of arbitration proved to be a disastrous move for Ali, he had lost the cause before it had even begun. Hearing of the outcome of the talks he declared: "The judgement is not based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah which was a condition for arbitration. Therefore. it cannot be accepted." Ali then delivered a speech in the Mosque of Kufa and asked the Muslims to ready themselves to confront Syria.

The Kharijite Split

Upon their hearing the result of the talks, the Khawarij again separated themselves from the other Muslims and this time arose in open revolt. A new and more dangerous group was thus created, which posed a greater threat than before.

They were a more political than theological group, they accepted the authority of Abu Bakr and Umar but, denounced Ali and Mu'awiyah. They held that, the use of an arbitrator in the dispute between the Caliph and Mu'awiyah had been un-Islamic, as only God was to be obeyed through the Qur'an and not the Judges. They also formulated a number of other concepts to which they held in antithesis to the Muslim majority, however, by the later period of Islam they were almost non existent.

They set up their centre at Nahrwan and began to propagate their ideology. Many were drawn to them and they amassed a sizable strength. They were extremely severe with those who differed from their beliefs and regarded such, as renegades from Islam, who deserved to die. Loyalty to the Caliph, which they called 'the cult of personality' was considered a tyranny in their view. In appearance they were pious, dressing in simple garb and spending much time in prayer, they were honest in their dealings but would kill anyone who said he supported the Caliph.

After the failure of arbitration, Ali attempted to hold peaceful negotiations with them, he sent some prominent men from among the Companions to try to persuade their leaders but to no avail. Ali asked them to hand over those of them who had killed innocent Muslims, but they responded by saying that, they were all responsible for that and that they intended to kill the rest of his followers.

The situation developed to a point of impass, and there were few options left, but before declaring war on the Kharijites, Ali proclaimed that those of them who would be loyal to him or those who had let Nahrwan and did not fight, would be given an amnesty. At this, some 3000 Kharijites repented and pledged their loyalty at Ali's hands. The remainder, stood firmly opposed to him.

Hostilities began, and a fierce fight ensued, the Kharijites fought desperately but suffered defeat, most of their leaders were slain. After the battle, Ali searched the dead body of the man, about whom the Prophet had prophesied, in foretelling of the trouble with the Kharijite. Ali came across the body which displayed all the signs foretold by the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), and remarked: "The Prophet was true indeed in his prophecy."

Ali Attempt's to March on to Syria

Following the battle of Nahrwan, Ali wished to march on to Syria but his men were in no disposition for that. when he encamped at Nakhila, a few miles from the capital. they asked for some time to rest. Ali permitted them to take some rest there but they started to slip away to their homes until only a few of them remained with Ali. Seeing this situation, Ali was forced to return to Kufa.

A while later, Ali once more asked the Kufis to march on Syria, he delivered a stirring speech in the Capital's main Mosque but the leaders of Kufa did not respond enthusiastically and all Ali's efforts to raise an army against the Syrians ended without success.

Loss of Control of Egypt

Qais ibn Sa'd had been appointed by Ali as the governor of Egypt, he had taken a pledge of loyalty from the Egyptians but the inhabitants of the town of Khartaba were not loyal to Ali. He left them undisturbed, as long as they did not disturb the peace. However, there were a few men who had designs on the post of governor of Egypt, they informed Ali that they suspected Qais, of being more loyal to Mu'awiyah, than he was to the Caliph and that he should remove Qais from office forthwith.

When Mu'awiyah heard of the situation, he immediately declared Qais to be his man. Hearing this. Ali dismissed him and appointed Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt. Mohammed was a young man and did not have the skills of diplomacy needed to control the Egyptians. He obliged the people of Khartaba

to pledge loyalty to Ali and occupied himself with them for some time, in the meanwhile the battle of Siffin had taken place, but he was so taken up with affairs in Egypt that, he was unable to send reinforcements to help Ali's forces.

After the battle of Siffin, Ali appointed Malik ibn Ushtar as the governor of Egypt. Ibn Ushtar was a strong man, but he never took up his post, expiring on the way to Egypt. Consequently, Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr remained in office as the governor of Egypt.

Following the arbitration, the Syrians declared Mu'awiyah to be their Caliph and took pledge of loyalty to him, thus Mu'awiyah extended his aims of controlling more of the Islamic State. His first action was to send an army under the command of Amr ibn As to attack Egypt. Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr, the governor of Egypt wrote to Ali requesting assistance. But before help could arrive Amr ibn As reached Egypt with six thousand men and, ten thousand men from the town of Khartaba also joined his army. They repulsed the two thousand men of Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr's forces with little effort, Mohammed himself resorted to taking shelter in a house but, he was caught and killed. Thus, in the year 38 H, Mu'awiyah took control of Egypt and appointed Amr ibn As as the Governor.

Basrah and Iran Shaken by Unrest

From Basrah, Abd Allah ibn Abbas governed the whole of Persia and other regions of the eastern Islamic State. The Basrites were pro-Ali but there were also pro-Mu'awiyah Uthmani elements there as well. In 38 H, Abd Allah ibn Abbas went to Kufa to pay a

visit to the Caliph, Abd Allah ibn Hadrami, an Uthmani who was pro-Mu'awiyah happened to be in Basrah at the time. He immediately recognised, in Abd Allah's absence, the opportunity to incite the people, to avenge, the assassination of Uthman. He rallied some support and managed to raise an army which invaded Basrah. the governor's deputy, Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan, was unable to face him and fled. Hearing about the uprising, Ali sent Jariah ibn Qudamah, who came from the Bani Tamim tribe, to Basrah with fifty people to negotiate with the Basrites, who were in the majority from the same tribe. He succeeded in his mission and the rebellion was put down. Seventy of Ibn Hadrami's followers, together with their leader, shut themselves inside a house which was burnt to the ground by pro-Ali Basrites.

When the people of Eastern Persia and Kirman heard of the burning of Ibn Hadrami, they refused to pay Kharaj Revenue (land tax) in protest, however, their uprising was short lived and swiftly put down. Ali consulted with Abd Allah ibn Abbas and appointed Ziyad ibn Abi Sufyan to govern Basrah and to control Persia and other eastern parts of the Islamic State.

In reaction, the Uthmanis tried to create general unrest in the country and in the year 39 H, corps of sizable strength set out from Syria. Ali tried to raise an army from Kufa but they would not come out in response to his call, they were not prepared to confront the Syrians again nor to attempt to repulse the invading Uthmanis.

One of the contingents under the command of Nu'man ibn Bashir went to Ain al Tamr but was defeated by Ali's governor there, Malik ibn Ka'b. Another group of six thousand men under the command of Sufyan ibn Auf, went to Ambar and Mada'in (Madyan), in Ambar they slew the officer in charge. Ali sent Sa'id ibn Auf with

an army to repel them but they took flight. Another group of three thousand men under Dahak ibn Qais came as far east as the neighbourhood of Basrah, Ali sent four thousand men under the command of Hajar ibn Adi, a fight took place in which nineteen Syrians were killed, the rest fled into the darkness of the night.

In the same year, Ali sent his deputy ibn Abbas, to lead the Hajj. Mu'awiyah also sent his deputy Yazid ibn Sanjar to lead the Hajj. A conflict between the two men ensued, and finally, it was settled that a third person, namely, Shaibah ibn Uthman ibn Abi Talha, would lead the Hajj. Thus, Ali was made to give up this symbol of the Caliphate.

Ali's hold on power was lessened daily, his most effective and eloquent speeches no longer spurred his friends into action. Every day that passed witnessed the decline of the Caliphate. A number of incidents also took place between pro-Mu'awiyah supporters and those who were pro-Ali, which only contributed to the general disharmony.

Hijaz and Yemen

Hijaz and Yemen were still under Ali's control and in the year 40 H, Mu'awiyah sent Busr ibn Abi Artat in the company of three thousand men to Hijaz. He went first to Madinah where the governor, Abu Ayyaub, was powerless to repulse the Syrians and he fled for Kufa. Busr forcibly extracted pledges of loyalty for Mu'awiyah from the Madinites and proclaimed: "Had Mu'awiyah not forbidden me, I would not have left one single adult alive in Madinah."

After taking control of Madinah, Busr reached Makkah and occupied it without opposition. There too, he forced the Makkans to make pledges of loyalty to Mu'awiyah.

Hence, on from Makkah, Busr journeyed to Yemen, at that time Ubaid Allah ibn Abbas was governor of the province. Hearing of the advancing Syrian army he fled to Kufa. Busr occupied San'a, the capital of Yemen and killed the two young sons of Ubaid Allah, he also slew a number of Ali's supporters.

Hearing of Busr's cruelty at San'a, Ali sent Jariah ibn Qudamah with two thousand men to Yemen, but before he reached the province, Busr fled to Syria. He also sent Wahb ibn Mas'ud with another two thousand troops to Hijaz. After establishing Ali's authority in Yemen, Jariah ibn Qudamah advanced to Makkah, and as soon as he reached the city, he received news of Ali's assassination, which brought his campaign to an abrupt end.

The civil war did not permit Ali to launch a Jihad and the Islamic Empire saw no further extension in his reign. However, some parts of Sistan (near present day Kabul) were conquered during his time and advances were also made towards India in the year 38 H, when the Muslims launched a Naval sortie on the port of Kohan (present day Mumbai).

CHAPTER THREE

Martyrdom and Summary of Ali's Achievements for Islam

Following the battle of Nahrwan the Khawarij had gone underground. Disgusted with the endless civil war, they opposed Ali as much as they opposed Mu'awiyah and they continued to work against the Caliphate. To bring this state of affairs to an end, they devised a plan in which they would capitalise upon the differences between the Muslims, regarding Ali and Mu'awiyah. They also wanted to do away with Amr ibn As, who they considered a chief planner for Mu'awiyah. They decided, therefore, to assassinate all three of them on the same day.

Three persons were appointed to assassinate Ali, Mu'awiyah and Amr ibn Al-As amely Abd Al Rahman Muljam, Bakr ibn Abd Allah and Amr ibn Bakr respectively. The mission was to be accomplished in the early hours of the 17th Ramadan in the year 40 H.

After the dawn prayers on the 17th Ramadan, the three appointed Kharijis struck the three targets. Mu'awiyah escaped with a minor wound, Amr ibn Al-As not turn up for dawn prayer that day because he was ill, but Ali was mortally wounded with the poisoned sword of Ibn Muljam and, in the evening of 20th Ramadan he passed away.

Ibn Muljam was caught by the people after the attack. Ali was-

sixty three years old at the time of his death and he had reigned as Caliph for four years and nine months.

Services to Islam

Ali had been elected as Caliph in a most critical period of Islamic history, the period of his Caliphate was marked by an extended civil war and his rule was punctuated by a series of revolts for the first time in Islamic history. The martyrdom of Uthman, which had been prophesied by the Prophet, had left the succeeding Caliph in a very difficult situation. On one hand, the assassins and the insurgents were creating endless disruption and on the other, the Banu Umayyah had fled to Syria where they gave Mu'awiyah the opportunity he sought in posing his demands to Ali to avenge Uthman's death.

Ali faced these difficulties with extraordinary courage, demonstrating his genius and exemplary character inspite of never receiving the full support from the other Companions and friends in Kufa, he was steadfast in his position.

Ali had been unable to locate Uthman's assassins and as long as there was unrest in the Empire it proved to be an impossible task. His prime aim was to create peace and stability in the region, but the Sabites resolved that, this would never be. They worked surreptitiously from both sides to make it impossible for Ali to discover the identity of the assassins and sent their agents to Syria to incite the people against him. Their purpose was to stir the Muslims to fight among themselves in order for them to take advantage of the disorder. Ali realised all this, but was unable to take firm action to

prevent it due to the civil war.

A third problem was the Kharijite movement. They were radicals who led numbers of Muslims into believing, that the appointment of Judges and even the Caliph was un-Islamic and they held that, the use of the sword was justifiable against those who opposed them. Ali dealt with them severely, realising that, if they were not crushed, they would persist as a threat to unity. Some of them escaped and went underground but their position was precarious.

Ali did his utmost to unite the Muslims and to return them to the position of unity that they had enjoyed during previous Caliphates. However, he was not successful in this, not through a lacking in capability on his side, but the tragic death of Uthman had been a portent for bloodshed among the Muslims which no earthly power could restrain. Neither were the Companions to be blamed for it, the culpable party were the anti-Islamic elements in the form of Abd Allah ibn Saba and his followers whom history records as being, the most vehement enemy to Islam. It was he who shattered the unity of the Muslims by feigning friendship with Ali in order to remain in Madinah, while their true objective was only to stir the Muslims to demand retribution for Uthman's murder, and so create discord. They acted out a two faced ploy, a faction of them played the role of friends of Ali while another went to Syria and other parts of the Islamic State to incite the Muslims against him.

Piety

Ali never lost heart, being a strong character and a man of cou-

rage, his will power and determination never left him even at the most crucial and dangerous times. At the same time he was a model of simplicity and self denial. He led the simplest of lives from the cradle to the grave and, was a faithful representative of the Prophet (peace and prayers be upon him), he had neither a servant nor maid when Fatimah, the most beloved daughter of the Prophet, married him. She would grind the corn herself and do all the household chores. Purity of motive and selflessness were the keynotes of his life, he was a wise counselor, a true friend and a generous enemy. He had no desire for the office of the Caliphate after Uthman's assassination, but when it was forced upon him, he did his best to fulfill the trust with which he had been charged.

Ali was a most honest and trustworthy person, his trustworthiness can well be seen from the fact that the Prophet entrusted him to return cash and other valuable things to their owners, at the time of his migration from Makkah to Madinah. Once, some oranges came into the Public Treasury, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn took one orange each, when Ali saw them with the fruit he took it away from them and gave it to the poor. Whenever any booty came in to the Public Treasury it was distributed according to Islamic Law. Once, Ali distributed all the revenue of the Public Treasury then swept it with a broom and offered two raka' of prayer in the room.

He did not leave his simplicity behind when he became Caliph and ruler of the Islamic Empire. Once, a person named Abd Allah ibn Zarir, was invited to take a meal with him, the meal was very simple and Abd Allah asked: "O Leader of the Muslims, why do you not eat the meat of birds?' Ali replied: "The Caliphate has a right in Muslim Public property only to the extent of, what is sufficient for himself and his family."

Ali was a very generous man, he never repulsed a beggar and sometimes he gave all his property to the poor and sold his arms to obtain food. Once he said during a speech: "I sold my sword, and I swear by God, had I only that amount of money for which I could buy a trouser wrap I would not have sold it." Hearing this, one man stood up and said: "I give you a loan."

Ali was a devout man and spent long hours in prayer. He had committed the entire Qur'an to memory and was so punctual for the Tasbih (remembrance of God) that he never missed it even during battles. He was kind to others and even to his enemies. Once upon seeing one of his enemies lying naked after his attack, he felt pity for him and did not kill him due to his naked state. After the battle of Jamal against Aishah, he treated her with all respect and ensured that she had safe passage home with her brother Mohammed ibn Abi Bakr. He never mistreated his enemies, during the time of the Prophet he once overcame a Jew in a fight and sat upon the man's chest to kill him, the Jew spat at his face and Ali left him at once. The Jew was much surprised at this and asked him why he had not killed him on the spot. Ali replied: "I was going to kill you for God's sake, but when you spat at me, my sincerity was endangered because of my personal feelings." Hearing this, the Jew immediately embraced Islam.

The character and morality of Ali was so noble that even Mu'awiyah praised him. Once, Mu'awiyah asked Dirar Asadi, a friend of his, to tell him about Ali's virtue. Dirar Asadi refused at first, but when Mu'awiyah insisted Dirar said: "He was a man of strong will-power and determination, he always gave fair judgement and was a fountain of knowledge, his speech was full of wis-

dom. He hated the pleasures of life and loved the darkness of the night, to weep before God Almighty. His dress was modest and he liked simple food. He lived as a common man and when anyone asked him any question he replied with utmost politeness. Whenever we asked him to wait for us he waited like a common man. Although he was very near to us because of his high morals, we were afraid of him sometimes, because of the grandeur and eminence he had from being close to God. He always respected a pious man and a scholar, he was the nearest to the poor and he never permitted a powerful man to take advantage of his power. The weak were never disappointed of his justice. I bear witness that in many battles he woke up during the night and took hold of his beard and started to weep and cry before God Almighty as though he was in a state of commotion, exclaiming: "O world! do not try to betray me, I have divorced you long ago. Do not have any desire for me, I hate you, your age is short and your end is despised. O! The provision is little and the journey is too long to the Hereafter, they way is full of danger..."

Hearing this, Mu'awiyah started to weep and said: "May God bless Abu Al-Hasan, I swear by God he was a person of the character you describe."

Scholastic Achievements

The Prophet (ppuh) had once said: "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate." Without doubt, Ali was a great scholar and Jurist of Islam. He had put the entire Qur'an to memory during the time of the Prophet, and knew its commentary including the order of descent and time of Revelation of the various verses. It is re-

corded that Ali once said: "I can tell why and when every verse of the Qur'an was revealed." Ali has been numbered among the foremost commentators of the Qur'an, no one among the Companions except Abd Allah ibn Abbas was equally learned in the Qur'an as Ali. His commentaries of the various verses of the Qur'an have been preserved in a number of works. He confined himself to his house for six months after the death of the Prophet, in order to devote his energy to compiling the various parts of the Qur'an. When he argued with the Khawarij on the question of arbitration, they could not stand before him because he was so learned in the knowledge of the verses of the Qur'an which prescribed the law.

Ali spent thirty years of his life with the Prophet and had observed all the manners and practices of the Prophet to the most detailed degree. He stood next to Abu Bakr as far as the knowledge of the sayings, practices and orders of the Prophet were concerned. During the period of the first three Caliphs and also during his time, he was the great Jurist of Islam. He performed this service for about thirty years after the death of the Prophet. In the narration of Hadith he was most cautious as his three predecessors had also been. For this reason only 586 Hadith narrated by Ali have been mentioned in books of Hadith. He is also recorded as having mentioned a number of sayings of various Companions.

Ali was not only a great scholar but a great Jurist too, he was famous for giving correct veredicts to the different problems brought before him, which he did very quickly, always based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Great Companions used to visit him to seek solutions to different problems of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. Umar once remarked: "Ali is the greatest jurist and judge among

all of us." Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud said: "Ali's decision is the most authentic." Due to his vast knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith, he became the greatest jurist of this time, as Islamic jurisprudence requires the knowledge of the Qur'an and Hadith to its fullest extent. On many occasions he corrected the decisions given by the great Companions such as Umar and Uthman. Even though he had differences with Mu'awiyah, the latter sometimes referred a complicated problem of Islamic Law to Ali and admitted his proficiency in the field.

Ali was a great orator as well, on many occasions throngs of people were convinced by his speeches which were given in such masterful and eloquent language. His writings were as symphonious as his speeches and he was also an accomplished poet. He framed the rules of Arabic syntax and appointed, Abul Aswad, to compose a book on the basis of the framework he had laid out.

Without question, Ali was one of the greatest sons of Islam, very few Companions equaled to him in proximity to the Prophet, whose noble qualities he imbibed.

CHAPTER FOUR

Administration of Ali

Ali followed the administrative pattern set out by Umar and did not make any significant changes to it. He tried to improve the administration in places where it had not been appropriate to do so during the time of Uthman. Upon appointing a governor to a post, he would give him valuable advice, on the occasion of Ka'b ibn Malik's appointment as supervisor of the various provinces, he told him: "Check the officers of each and every district of Iraq thoroughly so that they may not act incorrectly."

Like Umar before him, he was very particular about the moral standards of his officers, he never permitted them to neglect their duties or to behave with impropriety. Once, he discovered the governor of Istakhr, Mundhar ibn Jarud, was spending most of his time hunting instead of giving attention to his administration. He wrote to him: "I have been informed that you are spending much time in hunting and recreation and you neglect your duties. If this is true you will be punished." When Mundhar's negligence was proven, Ali dismissed him.

He wrote to another governor for his negligence: "It has come to my notice that you are leading a luxurious life, your table is provided with all variety of food which the common people do not enjoy. You behave un-Islamically while you are alone, but deliver sermons as if you were pious, if these complaints are true then remember that you are in loss and I will punish you...you cannot

hope for the reward given to righteous people when you have spoiled the wealth of orphans and widows for your pleasure...Repent for your sins and give the right of God due upon you."

Besides sending such letters of warning, he also sent commissions to watch the behavior of the officers in the different provinces.

Public Treasury and Revenue

Ali took great care with the Public Treasury as Umar had done. Once, his cousin Abd Allah ibn Abbas took ten thousand Dirhams from the Treasury, when Ali knew of this, he immediately wrote to his cousin ordering him to return it under threat of dire consequences if he did not.

He never permitted his own family to take more from the Public Treasury than they deserved. When Amr ibn Salamah brought some fat and honey from Isphahan as Kharaj (land tax), Umm Kulthum, the daughter of Ali, took some from it. When Ali counted the barrels and found one of each to be missing, and was told Umm Kulthum, had taken them, he told his daughter to pay for the price of the honey and fat she had taken.

Abu Rafi, the servant of the Prophet, once took a pearl from the Public Treasury for his daughter. When Ali, knew of this he not only took it back but also warned Abu Rafi severely from doing it again in future.

Ali was extremely strict in the matter of public revenues and its administration. Whenever there was a delay in receiving a tax, he immediately wrote to the officer. Once, Yazid ibn Qais was very

late in sending the revenue tax, Ali wrote to him: "Explain the delay in sending the Kharaj, I advise you to fear God and warn you not to repeat it in the future, otherwise, your virtues will be lost and your striving for God's sake will be spoiled. Fear God, and keep away from unlawful wealth, do not give me an opportunity to need to warn you again in this matter."

Once, Nu'man ibn Ujlan, an officer of the revenue, did not deposit the revenue in time and went away with it. Ali wrote to him: "One who embezzles the trust cannot be saved from the punishment of God. He destroys his worldly interests and the interests of the Hereafter...You belong to a righteous family, repent before God Almighty for your misbehavior, pay the revenue you have collected from the public and, do not compel me to punish you."

Ali improved the taxation system and imposed a land tax on forests whose produce was not contributing to military expenditure or being sold.

Allocation of Grants

Ali gave grants to the needy and helped the poor from the Public Treasury. He was very generous in this respect, even though, the Persians had once revolted against him, he treated them kindly and generously. They were so highly impressed, they called him 'the Just Arab'.

He was also very kind to the non-Muslim population, he used to instruct his officers to always treat them well and to attend to their needs. Once he wrote to one of his officers: "It has come to my attention that the non-Muslims of your area are complaining about

your strict behavior. Treat them well and do not be so harsh on them. Your strictness may cross the limits and turn into cruelty."

Once, a canal for irrigation belonging to non-Muslims was littered with rubbish. When he was made aware of this, Ali wrote to the officer in chief, Karzah ibn Ka'b Ansari: "The non-Muslims of your area have complained to me that one of their irrigation canals has been covered with rubbish. It is your duty to have it cleared. I swear by God that it is better for you, that the non-Muslims of your place, continue living happily rather than migrating elsewhere in difficulty."

Equality in Justice

His justice was equal to both Muslim and non-Muslim, the poor and the rich, the officer and the subordinate. He had himself once appeared before the Judge, and the decision was given against him because of lack of evidence. Once, he lost his amour, and after some time, saw it with a Christian. He filed a suit at the court of a famous Judge, Qadi Shuraih, who asked him to produce a witness but he could not do so. The armour was returned to the Christian who was so impressed with the justice of Islam, he became Muslim and said: "This is the example set by Prophets, the Caliph's case has been rejected because he had no evidence for his lawful claim."

The Armed Forces

Ali was an experienced army general of Islam. He fought a number of battles in the company of the Prophet. During his Cali-

phate, he delivered a crushing defeat to his opponents in the battle of Jamal. He also defeated the Khawarij and although he had the upper hand in the battle of Siffin, he had accepted arbitration for the sake of Islamic unity.

Ali established a number of new barracks in the State and built numerous fortresses in Persia, when there was an uprising there. He took special care of his borders with Syria, which was under the control of Mu'awiyah and established a multitude of army posts along it.

He constructed a bridge over the River Euphrates which was an important strategic defence. The fort of Askhar, built in Persia, was considered to be one of the most mighty constructions of his time.

Propagation of Islam

The propagation of Islam was his prime mission, and he was attentive to his duties as Caliph in this regard. Although he had not been able to conquer a great deal, in terms of new territory, during his reign due to the civil war, a number of people embraced Islam because of the good example and kind treatment he displayed to them. In Iran, many became Muslim after seeing his kindness publicly, and those who had forsaken Islam re-joined the Faith through his teaching.

Ali was a great administrator and one of the closest Companions of the Prophet, he possessed unparalleled courage, vigour and Faith.

CONCLUSION

Assessment of the Forty Years of Caliphate

The forty year rule after the Prophet was prophecised by him: "For thirty years after me, there will be a Caliphate, after which, it will change to a kingship."

This period of forty years was concluded in the Rabi al Awwal in the year 41 H. upon Al-Hasan's decision to abdicate in favour of Mu'awiyah, thus, marking the end of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

During those forty years the administration of God's Law by His servants for His servants, had been put into practical effect for the first time in the history of the world. Some have compared the Islamic system of government to democracy, however, a fundamental difference exists.

Islam is God given and the Islamic system of government is based upon the Law of God, not the law of the masses, therefore, it cannot be compared with democracy, as in democracy sovereignty is for the people, not for God Almighty. In practical effect this democracy is never realised. In the U.S.A. for example, which, has appointed itself as the guardian of democracy on the world stage, the system which prevails is anything but democratic. The senate which is the legislative power consisting of 100 senators passes laws upon 350 million U.S. citizens according to their whims and personal interests and then changes those laws whenever they no longer suit their personal interests. The 350 million citizens have not had a direct say in any of the laws imposed upon them by the

100 persons in power. This is not sovereignty of the people.

Democracy in modern civilisations means, the collective will of a group of people in a particular territory being completely independent and free therein, the laws being subject to their wishes and not their wishes to the laws, and the sole aim and object of the government consisting in, and its power of organisation, being used for the fulfillment of the collective desires of the masses.

In the first place, secularism released people from the fear of God and from the grip of stable and enduring moral values and made them unbridled and irresponsible slaves of theirselves, then nationalism. intoxicated them with the wine of national selfishness, blind prejudices and national pride, and finally democracy, above all, completed the picture and conferred full powers of legislation on these unbridled and intoxicated slaves of their own self. It seeks to prescribe that the sole object of government is, that its power be utilised for the attainment of things which people collectively desire.

The question that ultimately forces itself upon us is, how on earth does such an independent sovereign nation differ in this condition from a strong, free and independent individual who is a rogue? Whatever an individual rogue will do on a minor scale when he is entrusted with freedom, independence and power, exactly the same feat, but upon a very much grander scale will be performed by a whole nation when it is endowed with such powers. And when in this world there is not one nation alone like this, but all the civilised nations are organised on these principles of secularism. democracy and nationalism, then how can the world escape from becoming a battleground for the wolves of the human race?

These are the grounds that compel us to regard every social system which is based upon these three principles as, wrong and harmful to humanity.

While in Islam sovereignty is for God alone. As God Almighty says in the Qur'an:

"...Most surely the Ruling is only for God, He has Commanded that you shall not worship any other than Him. This is the true Religion, but most people do not know" (Surah 12 verse 40)

Islamic government is the application of God's Law. Thus, the comparison of Islam with democracy is erroneous and it is a contradiction in terms, to speak of 'Islamic democracy.' such a thing has not and never will exist for the very reasons set out above.

God, the Creator of the Universe and all things in it, Who subjected it for mankind, is The One, best to know, what law suits His creation. He has ordained for them the system by which to live in harmony with each other and in the universe, by means of His laws and commandments. It is arrogance of the highest order for mankind, as one of His created beings, to have the audacity to think that he could invent a more suitable system that the one God Almighty has set for mankind:-

"God has Ordained for you the Religion which He Commanded to Noah, and that We have revealed to you, and that which We Commanded to Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus: "Establish the Religion, and be not divided therein". The unbelievers are disdainful to follow what you invite to. But God chooses whom He pleases and guides to Him whoever turns towards Him." (Surah 42 verse 13)

God's Law is not subject to change or alteration, as is the case

with democratically founded law, God Almighty tells us in the Glorious Qur'an:

"Our Ordinance for those We sent before you of Our Messengers, and you will find no change in Our Ordinance."

(Surah 17 verse 77)

And also Jesus said:

"Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them * For truly I say to you till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is fulfilled.."

(Matthew 5: 17-18)

God Almighty sent His Last Messenger, the Prophet Mohammed (prayers and peace be upon him), to perfect His Message and the trust He vested in mankind. He conveyed God's Message to the people as it was revealed to him, and guided the people to follow it.

The Qur'an explains how mankind should conduct his affairs in the appointment of a Caliph for the implementation of God's Law:

"And those who respond to their Lord and establish prayer, and who on matters other than those God has decreed, conduct them by mutual consultation, and who expend of what We have bestowed on them" (Surah 42 verse 38)

INSTITUTION OF THE CALIPHATE

The institution of the Caliphate began with the accession of Abu Bakr, who was the first Caliph and head of the Islamic State.

Abu Bakr had not been nominated by the Prophet before his death, but he was chosen through the process of mutual consultation between the Ansar as well as the Muharjirin, at a special assembly of the Muslims in the Prophet's Mosque, where pledges of loyalty were made to him by all the Muslims. This became the precedent for subsequent elections of succeeding Caliphs.

Principles of Government

The government of the 'Rightly guided Caliphs' was based upon the following principles:

A Caliph was never nominated during the period of the

Rightly Guided Caliphs, the election of Abu Bakr took place after general consultation. The election of Umar, Uthman and Ali was made with the general consent and consultation of the people.

Obligation to the Qur'an and Sunnah

Though the Caliph is the head of State, he is bound by all means to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. He can only exercise his authority according to the injunctions of the Qur'an. If the Qur'an is not explicit in any given matter, he is bound to refer to the Sunnah of the Prophet. In case of there being no clarification in the Sunnah it has to be referred to the consultation of Scholars who can only give a verdict upon the broader confines of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

The Caliph is obligated to perform a number of duties in the course of his office. He is the Imam of the Prophet's Mosque for the five obligatory prayers, for the Friday prayer and for the Eid Prayer.

He is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, he can appoint generals, and send armies for Jihad in the cause of God to liberate peoples from any oppression.

The Caliph is the final court of appeal and acts in a position similar to that of a 'chief justice' today. In the beginning,, Abu Bakr had decided all cases himself as the Prophet had done, but later on, separate judges were appointed and the judiciary was independent of the executive, but the Caliph was considered the final court of appeal, because the Rightly Guided Caliphs were prominent Jurists and experts of Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. Umar separated the executive and the judiciary for the first time in history.

The Shura

Advisory Council

Although the Caliph was the head of State and the highest authority, he did not generally decide matters without consultation. The Consultative Body or, Council of Advisors was known as the 'Shura' or 'Majlis al Shura'. All four Caliphs consulted it in all the affairs of State. The 'Shura' has its origin in the teachings of the Qur'an and Chapter 42 of the Qur'an bears the title 'al Shura' which means The Consultation.

The Prophet (ppuh), who was the source of all Islamic knowl-

edge and who was the sole authority on Islamic Law, himself followed the Shura and was commanded by God Almighty to do so as shown in the following verse of the Qur'an:

"...and consult them in the matter and when you reach a decision, place your trust in God, surely God loves those who put their trust in Him." (Surah 3 verse 159)

Umar, the pioneer of the concept of freedom of expression, emphasized on many occasions that there can be no Caliphate without consultation and consent of the people. The number of members of the Shura was not fixed, it consisted of the principle Companions of the Prophet, who were given preference on the basis of their services to and for Islam. The ten Companions, who were given glad tidings of Paradise by the Prophet, were chief members of the Shura. These were: Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Ali, Abd Al Rahman ibn Auf, Talha, Zubair, Sa'd ibn Waqqas, Abu Ubaidah ibn Jarrah and Sa'id ibn Zaid.

Leading Muhajirin and Ansar, were also included in the Shura. On special occasions even ordinary citizens of Madinah or visiting dignitaries and chiefs of the tribes of various provinces, were also called to attend the meeting of the Shura. Usually, a meeting was called by means of a herald who would go around proclaiming 'Assemble for Prayers'.

Freedom of Opinion

Everyone in the Shura was free to express his views whether they were in accord with the Caliph or not. Once, Umar clarified it in a short speech given at a Shura meeting: "I have called you to

share with me the trust of which I am a trustee. I am an ordinary person like you and you are free to claim your rights. Everyone of you is free to oppose me or to agree with me. I will never impose my views upon you."

The Shura used to advise the Caliph in the performance of various duties, he took advice of the Shura in appointment of generals for the armies, in the appointment of governors, in the despatch of armies, in the fixation of salaries, in the appointment of public officers and judges, in assessment of taxes and in the creation of new posts.

Neither the Caliph, nor the Shura was a sovereign legislative body. They did not have the power to change Islamic Law or even to modify it or, to violate the dictates of the Qur'an or the Sunnah. The Caliph used to refer first of all, to the Qur'an in case of any new problem, then to the Sunnah. In case he did not find any solution in these sources, he referred it to the special Shura which comprised the chief jurists and scholars of the time, whereupon the matter was usually resolved by their unanimity. In the absence of the above three sources, the Caliph could give his own verdict based upon the Qur'an and Sunnah. It should be borne in mind that the Caliph at that time was a great expert of Islamic Religion and Law and a great Jurist, and by all means was authorised and capable of giving his own verdict.

At no time in the history of the world, had the concept of freedom of opinion been so completely observed as during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Every Muslim was free to express his opinion and even to criticise the Caliph. The Caliph met with the Muslims at the time of the Shura as well as five times a day at the

congregational prayers, once a week at the Friday prayer, and once a year at he time of Hajj, when the Muslim public from all regions of the State were assembled in Makkah.

None of the Rightly Guided Caliphs lived in palaces or mansions with grand entrances. There were no watchmen at their houses which were open to every Muslim. It was the strict order of Umar that the governors, were not to keep watchmen at their houses so that everyone could see them freely and put his problems before them. The houses of Abu Bakr and Umar were of a lower standard than most of the houses belonging to the Muslims. They were merely mud huts and everyone was free to visit them at any time they liked. The freedom of opinion, as observed during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, is unparalleled even in the modern age.

The Public Treasury

For the first time in history the treasury was considered as public property and not the private property of the ruler. They considered it a great trust and never spent a single coin for their use purposes. Abu Bakr, Umar and Ali took a salary from the Public Treasury, but only an amount which was just sufficient for any ordinary man. Uthman, never took anything from the Public Treasury. Once, Umar asked Salman Farsi: "Tell me whether I am a king or a Caliph." He replied: "If you impose tax of even a single Dirham on a Muslim wrongly and spend it wrongly, you are a king, otherwise you are a Caliph."

Umar clarified what a Caliph is entitled to take from the Public

Treasury, he said: "Nothing is Halal (lawful) for me and my family from God's money except, a dress for the summer and a dress for the winter, and a salary equal to the income of an average Makkan."

Abu Bakr took a small salary from the Public Treasury which was barely enough for himself and his family. At the time of his death, he asked his wife to sell his property and pay back the money he had taken in salary and give it to the Public Treasury.

Ali followed the example of Abu Bakr and Umar and took only a salary equal to the income of the average Muslim. He used to wear clothes with a number of patches on them. All the Caliphs treated the public Treasury as a trust.

The Law

In those days, Islamic Law was supreme, the Judges and the courts were never interfered with, in their proceedings. They were totally free from any kind of pressure. The Caliph did not think of himself as an extraordinary person, or independent of the Law. In the eye of the Law, he was an ordinary Muslim. A Judge was as free to give decisions against the Caliph as he was to do so against a common man. Once, Ali saw a Christian selling his lost armour when he was Caliph, he took the matter to court but had no evidence to prove the armour was his, so the Judge ruled in favour of the Christian. Whenever the Caliph appeared before a judge he did not allow him to pay undue respect to himself on account of his Caliphate but, asked him to treat him like an ordinary Muslim.

The Caliphs did not treat the government as their inherited right,

but as a trust and as such, they declared themselves to be Trustees. In the first speech delivered by Abu Bakr upon his becoming Caliph he said: "I have been appointed as ruler over you, although I am not the best among you, I swear by God Who holds my life in His hands, that I never wanted it and I never prayed for it.. Obey me only if I obey God and His Prophet. Do not obey me if I do not obey God. I explained the rights you have over me and you are free to demand them anytime..."

Whenever Umar appointed a governor or an officer, he advised him: "I am not appointing you to be master of the people. You have been appointed so that you may establish prayers and observe justice and pay the rights of the people to them."

Uthman said in his first address: "I am to follow my predecessors and not to create a new thing in the government. I promise to obey the Book of God, to follow the Sunnah of His Prophet and to be observant in three matters; 1. the principles formed on the basis of the consensus of opinion of the Muslims, will be obeyed. 2. In case I do not find any principle set be my predecessors, I will decide a case after due consultation. 3. I will not punish you unless it is due in law."

When Ali appointed, Qais ibn Sa'd as the governor of Egypt, he sent a letter to the Muslims of Egypt which read: "You have the right to see if we are following the Book of God and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and if we are ruling over you according to the Right Path, and that we may order you according to the ways of the Prophet and be good to you even behind your backs."

These examples clearly demonstrate how the Rightly Guided Caliphs regarded the government as a trust given to them by God

Almighty rather than, an inherited institution such as, a kingship.

The Administration under the Rightly Guided Caliphs

The Secretariat

During the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs there was no office for conducting the affairs of government. In the beginning, the governmental activities were conducted under the direct supervision of the Caliph. But when the work increased and different duties were entrusted to different Companions, the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque was used as the main office, where the secretaries and assistants of the Caliph used to work seated on the floor or upon grass mats. The Caliph himself used to sit on the floor of the Mosque or on mats made of grass. So the Mosque of the Prophet became the centre of all religious activities.

Administration of the Provinces

During the time of Umar, the Islamic State was divided for the first time into eight provinces; Makkah, Madinah, Syria, Jaziah, Basrah, Kufa, Egypt and Palestine.

Each province was under the administration of an officer named a Wali or governor. The Wali was the representative of the Caliph in the province and, was entitled to perform the administrative functions on his behalf.

He was also the religious head of the province and used to lead the five compulsory prayers at the main Mosque of the capital and also, the Friday and Eid Prayers. In most cases, the Wali was also

the commander of the provincial army. In addition to the Wali, the following officers were installed in the provinces: The Treasury Officer, the Revenue Collector, the Chief of Police, the Judge and the commander of the army, if the Wali was not the commander.

The provinces were divided in districts, each district was under the supervision of a district officer, known as 'Amil'. In most of the districts there were separate 'Qadis' (judges). The district officers were under the Wali (Governor) of the Province.

At the time of his appointment, a Wali was given instructions regarding his responsibilities and was advised to conduct himself in accordance with the ways of the Prophet. During the time of Umar, an officer had to furnish a list of his properties and belongings on his appointment. Any extraordinary increase in his property was subject to inquiry. Umar confiscated the properties of some officers such as, Abu Hurairah and Amr ibn As on these grounds.

The officers were paid substantial salaries in order that they would not indulge in corrupt activities.

The Administration of Revenue

There were five main sources of revenue: 'Zakat, Jizya, Kharaj, Khums and Fay'. The collection of revenue was not a problem during the days of the Prophet, when the State was relatively small and sources limited. With the expansion of the Islamic State, there arose a need to organise and control the revenue. Umar was the first Caliph to organise the revenue and administer it upon strict Islamic principles. He also introduced some taxes such as the Ushr.

As far as the expenditure of the Zakat was concerned, there are

clear instructions in the Qur'an on how the Zakat is to be spent and, a separate account kept for it. Every Muslim on whom Zakat was compulsory, used to give Zakat without hesitation. The Muslims regarded it a sin, to keep wealth without paying Zakat.

Jizya (indemnity tax) was imposed on the non-Muslims. Umar fixed its annual rate, which was different for the various incomes groups. Kharaj (Land Tax) was charged upon the lands of non-Muslim owners after Muslim conquest. The amount of Kharaj was fixed according to the quality of soil. The Kharaj was also paid by the Muslims in later days. Ushr. was a tax charged upon owners of large estates and Fey, was a tax upon unclaimed lands or lands confiscated from rebels. Khums, was the one-fifth share of the State in the booty taken in war.

All the money was kept in the Public Treasury, there was no separate building for it during the days of the Prophet, and Abu Bakr, because the income was limited, and it was distributed among the deserving people as soon as it was received. Realising the need of a building,, Umar constructed the building of the Public Treasury in the form of a mud house in Madinah. Buildings were also constructed in the provinces for the same purpose, where the Public Treasury was under the supervision of a Treasury Officer. After provincial expenses had been taken, the remaining money was sent to the Central Treasury in Madinah.

The Police Force

Police were appointed in various provinces. Umar, the second Caliph, introduced night watches and patrol. He himself, used to go

out on patrol of the city at night. Ali introduced a regular police force.

The Army

The Caliph was commander in chief of the armed forces and, appointed a commanders in the various provinces. The army was made up of a mumber of of ranks, on every ten soldiers there was a Lieutenant. There were also doctors, spies and other civilians in the army. The army was raised on a regular basis during the time of Umar, and barracks were built by him. Each army had a cavalry, which used shields, swords and lances, and an infantry, which had shields, swords and long lances and helmets for defence, they also wore trousers and boots.

The Navy

Since Arabia is surrounded by sea on three sides, a naval force was created during Uthman's reign and in 28 H, the first naval battle took place under the command of Mu'awiyah, who invaded Cyprus.

The Muslims at that time were great traders and used to sail across the Red Sea to Abyssinia and other African territories. They also went to India and China. The main port of export to these countries at that time was, Oballah on the Arabian Gulf.

Treatment of non-Muslims

The non-Muslims enjoyed protection and all basic rights. They were exempted from service to the Military and in lieu of military service, they had to pay a tax, named Jizya, for their own protection. They were entitled to enjoy all the rights and privileges of the State. The main groups of non-Muslims were, Christians, Jews and Sabians. Umar, had a keen eye over the advantage of non-Muslims and spared no pains to promote their welfare. Special grants and pensions were given to non-Muslims from the Public Treasury. Non-Muslims were even allowed to adjudicate according to their own laws, administered by the heads of their respective communities. This, demonstrates the tolerance of Islam in respect of non-Muslims within its territories. If they became Muslim it was of their own volition and, in any case they were afforded full security of their honour, their lives and property.

Personal Life

The Rightly Guided Caliphs led extremely pious and simple lives. Quite different from the lives led by the Emperors of Persia or Rome. They did not build palaces, luxurious residential quarters or, imposing buildings for the offices or courts. Their private homes were mud houses or cottages. They worked like ordinary Muslims and did not feel any shame in helping with household chores. Although they had much wealth at their disposal, they led humble and simple lives, because their purpose was to seek the pleasure of God in guiding people to the way of Islam. Their doors were ever open to the poor and, they listened to the people's com-

plaints and grievances. They used to serve people during the day, and worship God a major part of the night. Their hearts were dedicated to the love of God and they were the most pious and God fearing Muslims of their times. The robes of the Caliph were no better that the common Muslims, often their garments were patched and worn off.

Dress

The dress consisted of a long shirt reaching to the knee, and trousers. A loose fitting tunnic like garment was also worn over the robe or, a cloak sometimes was worn. The Arabs used the Turban as a head dress, this differed according to age, position and, learning. Sandals and shoes were used as foot wear.

The dress of women were loose trousers and a shirt with full and loose sleeves, women covered their heads with a scarf. Before the Caliphate of Umar, women used to attend congregational prayers in the mosques but he placed restrictions on this. They used to travel on camels in Hijab in a canopy covering themselves. Women had priviledges in society and, if a Muslim had more than one wife he was required by Law to treat them equally. For the first time in history, women were afforded equality in society, they used to teach girls and also boys, but from under a Hijab. Aishah, the wife of the Prophet, was a great scholar of Hadith and Islamic Law, especially the Laws which pertained to women. The ladies attended the Sermons of the Caliph in Hijab (veiled).

Education

Education existed in the form of mass education, during the time of Umar. He built mosques in many districts which were used for religious education. Besides the mosques, special schools were constructed in which the Qur'an, Hadith and Theology were instructed. Teachers were appointed to impart knowledge and, education was free to all. In one school, in Syria, about 1600 students received higher education.

In the time of Ali, the cities of Kufa and Basrah were the principal centres of religious education, on a level which compares to university education today. In such schools, higher education in Arabic language and grammar, in the Qur'an and in Islamic Law and jurisprudence were given. The Caliphs were themselves great scholars and, used to play an active role in advancing the education of the people. Poetry was also common in those days as a popular form of linguistic art.

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The Rightly Guided Caliphs

Islam is a practical Religion and does not indulge in idle speculations and futile theorisations. Its concept of faith is not as a mere profession of belief, but the very mainspring of life. Righteous conduct must flow from belief in God. The religion is something to be lived, as the reader will witness in the lives of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and not an object of mere verbal eulogising and lip service. The political system of Islam is entirely different from other s tems, such as democracy, communism or that of absolute monarchy. Islam is based upon the spiritual and moral foundations of Divine Revelation, however it is not a theocracy per se, in that it does not confer Divine Rights upon any elected or hereditary individual or party. The Caliphate is essentially an entrustment whereby mankind conduct their lives according to the Will of God and administer His Law within the limits given him by god Almighty. A detailed and serious study of the lives of the Rightly Guided Caliphs enables us to understand and follow Islamic teachings to their ultimate extent. Their lives open before us a treasure of knowledge and experience about the Islamic system of life which offers the only real solution to the present and future problems of humanity.

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